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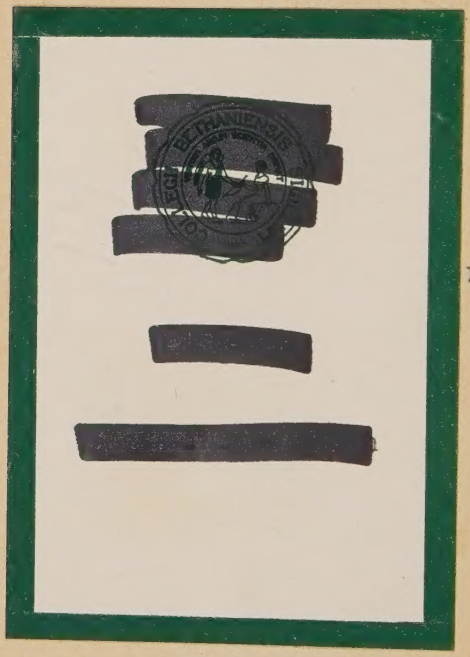

BETHAN
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Confident Morning

Confident Morning

A Novel

By

ARTHUR STANWOOD PIER

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
ELISE
WHOSE SOUL WAS COURAGE
AND
WHOSE HEART WAS LOVE

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Confident Morning

I

Among the persons gathered in front of the gate through which the passengers from the Eastern Express would soon come hurrying, was a family group of four, husband and wife and two daughters. They manifested an eagerness, an emotional expectancy, that contrasted with the stolid bearing of most of the persons on the platform whose duty or pleasure it was that afternoon to welcome arriving relatives or friends.

'Do elongate yourself another inch, Father dear, and tell us if you see it,' said the fair-haired girl.

Obligingly the elderly gentleman, who, being somewhat over six feet tall, already commanded an excellent view of the track, rose upon tiptoe. Then, settling back upon his heels, he shook his head.

'Surely it can't be late when it's posted as on time! Can you imagine Uncle Robert's railroad issuing misleading bulletins!'

'Adelaide dear, it's still two minutes before it's due.'

'Oh, Laura, you're so exact! How can you notice such things! All I feel is that now we're here we shouldn't be kept waiting.'

'Yes, darling, I'm just as impatient as you. And Mother's more impatient than either of us. Aren't you, Mother dear?'

The gray-haired lady in the lavender hat and lavender broadcloth smiled. 'No, I'm too happy to be impatient. I know that it can't be very long now before we shall see him.' Her dark eyes sparkled as she glanced at her husband and added, 'It's your father who has the fidgets.'

The head of the family, who was at the moment rising again upon tiptoe and nervously mopping his neck with his

handkerchief, did not hear the remark. He possessed great powers of inattention, especially to the women of his family. His garb, although not wholly ecclesiastical, defined him as a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He had effected a compromise between the uniform of his calling and the habiliments of a layman of fashion. His waistcoat and collar were clerical, his coat was a smart cutaway; coat, waistcoat, and trousers, instead of being of conventional black, were of a dashing gray. He was not strikingly spiritual looking; his blue eyes were round, roving, and lacking in expression; his lips were full and thick, his chin small, his face had a beefy ruddiness. Having completed the mopping of his neck, he removed his Panama hat in order to mop his brow, and in doing so revealed the spacious baldness of his head. A fringe of blond hair clung to the perpendicular ascent an inch above his collar. A man of sixty, he was commanding in figure and bearing, and disappointing in countenance and expression.

He exclaimed, 'It's coming!'

The two girls gave a gasp of excitement and hugged each other's arms; their mother pressed close to her husband's side; indeed the whole family drew instinctively closer together — as families should do when they are deeply moved.

The long train swept in majestically, celebrating its triumphant arrival with bell-ringing.

'It looks just like any train!' murmured the mother.

'And it's the most wonderful train that ever was!' said Adelaide, the fair-haired girl. 'Tell us the moment you catch sight of him, Father.'

The clergyman snatched off his hat and waved it aloft. 'There he is!' he cried. He continued to wave his hat while his wife and daughters strove vainly to see the beloved face.

Then out of the throng pressing through the gate there emerged for them one figure, a tall, blond young man in olive drab, wearing an overseas cap with a major's gold leaf shining

in the front of it. The three women closed in upon him, hugging, exclaiming, kissing him, while the father stood, beaming at his son and mopping his head.

The young man was by no means passive; he gave as good as he got, laughing, kissing, exclaiming — 'My word, Mother, you're blooming! And the parson's a likely looking fellow himself.'

'Oh, Roger, you adorable old thing!'

'You old darling!'

The two girls clung to him, petting him.

'But, Roger dear, I should twist the ends of it.' This from Adelaide, the fair-haired sister.

'Twist what?'

'This little love.' Adelaide placed her finger on the small moustache that ornamented his upper lip.

'I'll discuss that with you later. — You two girls look pretty well turned out. Delighted to see that you both make the most of yourselves. — Oh, I was forgetting.' He turned suddenly and spoke to an older man in uniform who had waited a little aloof, observing the family reunion with sympathetic eyes. 'Hoyt, I'd like to have you meet the family. — I guess you and the parson know each other already.'

'Why, my dear fellow!' exclaimed Roger's father, coming forward and grasping Hoyt's hand. 'My dear fellow! This is delightful — delightful!'

'My mother, my sisters — Mr. Hoyt, our regimental chaplain,' Roger hastily explained.

'And rector of Saint Stephen's,' interjected his father.

'And one of the three men in the regiment to get the D.S.C.,' added Roger.

'Oh, yes, we know all about that.' The mother spoke for the girls as well as herself; all three women looked at the chaplain with a certain tenderness as well as admiration in their eyes.

'Yes, indeed; we all know that you've reflected glory on the

church,' said the clergyman. 'We were all proud of you when we read of the decoration.'

'Many others deserved it more than I did, Dr. Kendall.' The chaplain's voice was quiet, his words slow-spoken — his utterance that of a man both tired and sad.

'I can't make him believe he's any kind of a fellow,' said Roger. 'He's probably right; probably G.H.Q. didn't know what they were about.'

'Why shouldn't you come with us, Hoyt?' said Dr. Kendall. 'We've got a big car here — and we'll drop you anywhere you say.'

'Won't you come right home with us, and let us give you a cup of tea?' said Mrs. Kendall. 'And then we can send you wherever you want to go.'

'Thank you, no; I have my luggage to look after. — Good-bye, Roger; good-bye.'

'Poor man, it's a sad home-coming for him,' said Mrs. Kendall, following the chaplain with sympathetic eyes.

'Yes, it's pretty forlorn.' The Kendalls as they walked through the station seemed suddenly subdued. 'He didn't notify any one about his arrival.'

'I do wish we'd made him come home with us!'

'You couldn't have, Mother. He's going first of all to visit his wife's grave.'

The little group passed out of the station in silence.

In the open air and sunshine of the May afternoon Dr. Kendall assumed his customary heartiness.

'I hope you'll like the new car, Roger,' he said, as he led the way to the shining and luxurious automobile beside which stood a chauffeur, also new, who smiled and saluted. 'I was very much afraid it wouldn't be delivered before you got home, and I wanted to surprise you with it.'

'A present for me, is it?' asked Roger, as he waited for his mother and sisters to seat themselves.

'Well, hardly that, hardly that,' replied Dr. Kendall.

'Oh, just been blowing yourself; I see; you've done yourself rather well, I think.' Roger followed his father into the car. 'Driven by your daughters, I suppose, to commit this extravagance.'

'It *is* nice, isn't it?' said Laura.

'We ran the old car during the war,' explained Dr. Kendall. 'After that it didn't seem any longer such a duty to economize.'

The chauffeur started the engine; the big car nosed its way delicately through the down-town traffic and soon was rolling smoothly along the broad boulevard.

Roger, facing round from the small chair seat that he was occupying, said to his sisters, 'Now, girls, let's see your hands.'

Bewildered but obedient they offered him their right hands.

'Not the right hand! Don't you know better than that when anybody asks to see your hand? Have you never had your fortunes told? The left hand — and take off your gloves.'

Each of them extended a shapely white hand, the fingers guiltless of rings.

'What does it mean?' demanded Roger. 'Why aren't you both wearing engagement rings? Here it is six months since the Armistice, and practically all your friends home again; you surely don't mean to pretend that you're neither of you engaged!'

'Oh, Roger, how silly!'

'Perhaps while you were still away, Roger, nobody else could be a hero to Laura and Adelaide,' suggested Mrs. Kendall. 'But now that you're with them again, it may be easier for some one else to be their hero.'

'Mother will always have the wisdom of the serpent even if she is a clergyman's wife,' observed Roger.

'Now what do you mean by that remark?' asked Dr. Kendall.

'It would have been more sensible if I'd said, "since she's a

clergyman's wife,"' replied Roger. 'Most clergymen's wives need the wisdom of the serpent. Though I don't think it's necessary in your case, Father.'

Roger's glance, both shrewd and affectionate, rested on his father, who threw back his head and laughed.

'No,' said Dr. Kendall, 'I flatter myself I've always been pretty well able to look after my own. You'll realize that even more when you get home.'

'You've been doing things to the place, have you? Shall I find it much changed?'

'The appearance of it is spoiled, owing to the fact that we turned the lawn into a potato patch. I'm trying to restore it this year, but it will take a long time, I am afraid, before we shall have a proper looking lawn again.'

'I should think you would have gone on growing potatoes. Food will be scarce, even though the war is over.'

'The old garden will supply enough for our own use. I felt that it was no longer a public duty to produce food and neglect the æsthetic values.'

Again the glance that Roger cast at his father was slightly quizzical. He could detect no consciousness of humor in that bland blond visage.

The car rolled out into the pleasant suburb in which the Kendalls lived — a region of large houses with spacious, well-kept grounds, of well-paved streets shaded by oaks.

Roger said, 'You can't imagine how many times I've thought of just this moment — getting home! And seeing you all waiting for me at the station — those were the two things I've thought of most.'

'No oftener, I'm sure, than we've thought of them,' said his mother. She took his hand. 'This is one of the great days in my life.'

'And in mine.' He responded warmly to the pressure of her fingers.

'You must try to overlook the scrawny appearance of the

grounds,' said Dr. Kendall. 'Remember that we sacrificed them in a good cause. Though in some respects I think you'll find the place looking very well. The shrubs have never been finer than they are this spring.'

The car turned in at the red brick gateway.

At the head of an avenue of oaks the house came into view, a spreading brick house, with ample wings and wide verandas; blue-and-white awnings shaded the windows; it had the appearance of standing up to its knees in shrubbery — lilacs, forsythias, hydrangeas, weigelas, and white-flowering spireas. To one side of it and enclosed within a low brick wall lay a garden, bright with tulips and daffodils.

'O. D. is out of key,' remarked Roger. 'I can't feel at home here until I get back into civilian clothes.'

'Don't take off your uniform yet!' begged Laura. 'It's so becoming; you must wear it to church to-morrow.'

The car stopped; the sisters escorted Roger cajolingly up the veranda steps; Dr. Kendall and his wife followed.

'Yes, Roger,' pleaded Mrs. Kendall. 'Do wear it to church to-morrow! Give the girls and me that pleasure. We shall be all the more proud of you.'

'Yes,' said Dr. Kendall. 'And I am sure the congregation would like to see you in full regalia.'

'I don't care for the idea,' said Roger. 'Still, if it will give you any pleasure, I'm willing to be displayed as a military hero this once. But I'm going to put on civilian clothes now; and I'm going to put them on again after church to-morrow.'

They passed into the large hall; Roger glanced about with curiosity. He had expected that the house would seem less well kept than formerly, that the furnishings of it would show signs of dinginess and decrepitude; but he found himself gazing at a handsome new Persian rug, and at new high-backed brocaded chairs on either side of the fireplace, and at a new sandalwood desk over in the corner. He walked to the doorway of the drawing-room and looked in.

'It's a very attractive room,' he said. 'Laura and Adelaide, when they're dressed up, ought to fit into it handsomely.'

'The drawing-room is well enough,' said Dr. Kendall, from behind his son's shoulder. 'But you will be more interested in the contribution to the establishment that I regard as peculiarly my own.'

'Oh, Father, Roger doesn't want to go down into the cellar now, I'm sure.'

'What have you been doing to it?' Roger asked. 'It may very well be the most interesting part of the house.'

'It's the part to which I may say I have given the most thought during the last few months. As you know, I never kept a large stock of wine or liquor. But with the country going dry — it seemed only just to one's offspring to take defensive measures.'

'Most thoughtful,' Roger agreed.

Mrs. Kendall said, 'Don't you want to go to your room, Roger? I hope you'll like it — almost as well as the cellar!'

'Have you been doing things to it too?'

'Oh, not much — just renovated it a little.'

Roger laughed. 'I suppose I'll find it a charming lady's boudoir.'

'Charming gentleman's,' Adelaide corrected him. 'The charming ladies are across the hall.'

A few minutes later, glancing over the bright cretonne coverings of his chairs, the filmy muslin curtains, the embroidered bed linen, he felt that the term which he had suggested for the room had not been misapplied. But he did not disdain the elegancies and luxuries with which his mother had chosen to surround him. He enjoyed their freshness and delicacy and brightness as he enjoyed the May breeze and the May sunshine that together flickered through the leaves of the oaks outside his windows. He noticed how thoughtfully everything had been disposed for his comfort; the large armchair by the window and beside it a small table with cigarettes

and books. He glanced at the titles, a novel by Conrad, a detective story, a recent volume of essays, nothing about the war and, of course, nothing up to date and erotic; he opened the closet door and beheld his civilian clothes hanging in fresh array, as free from the smell of camphor as from the corrupting moth and dust; he looked into his bureau drawers and found neckties and handkerchiefs, shirts and socks, laid away in scrupulous order.

As he unbuttoned his coat and began to prepare for the momentous change back to civilian life, his thoughts dwelt upon his mother and father affectionately yet with an amazement that was touched in the one case with admiration, in the other with irony.

'How wonderful not to have changed!' he murmured. 'Wonderful!'

II

While Roger was making his leisurely preparations in his room, the other members of the family betook themselves to their several tasks. Dr. Kendall withdrew to his study to meditate upon the morrow's sermon, his wife sat at her desk in the library casting up her household accounts for the week, and in the same room on the sofa Laura, with tablet in her lap and Bible open at her side, made notes for the lesson for her Sunday School class — Church School, rather; she had difficulty in accustoming herself to the new designation. Adelaide, having no tasks to perform, stretched herself out on a long wicker chair on the veranda and lighted a cigarette.

Her thoughts reverted to the surprise that Roger had professed at finding that neither she nor Laura was engaged. Of course she might have been; she hoped Roger paid her the compliment of knowing that. And perhaps now that he was at home she might more readily come to a definite decision in the case of two men who were still troubling her. There was Roland Wagoner, who was absorbed in biophysical research and gave her intermittent though ardent attention. It was flattering enough to receive that from Roland, for he had never shown any interest in any other girl and had been supposed in his devotion to science to be quite superior to the allurement of feminine charms. Adelaide had felt that such a reputation in any man constituted a challenge, and she had recently had the satisfaction of proving to herself that Roland was not so unattainable as the other girls all thought him. The triumphant discovery, of course, had awakened in her both tenderness and uneasiness, but Adelaide's warmth of heart was accompanied by coolness of head; she felt that if Roland's interest in her was intermittent now, marriage would not be likely to render it continuous. Smoking reflectively,

she reviewed her sentiments about him. He was sure to be a distinguished man in his specialty; every one was agreed on that point. But it was a specialty in which she had no interest or understanding; she would never be able to help him in it; she would probably find the scientists that he would bring to the house very boring persons; she would probably even find him boring if she married him. Besides, it wouldn't be right to marry just from a feeling of tenderness and a desire to do something to compensate a man for willfully disturbing his life. But she wasn't quite sure yet that he couldn't awaken a stronger feeling in her; if he were only less intermittent and more ardent she thought perhaps he might. Anyway, it might help her to decide what to do if she were to ascertain Roger's opinion of Roland — of course without letting him suspect the reason for her interest!

Then there was the case of Leonard Warder. Adelaide lighted a fresh cigarette before passing on to the subject of Leonard. Banking was, if anything, more stupid than science and not really so valuable. Of course Leonard would be so rich that he could give his wife absolutely anything that she might ask for. And he was so generous that he would give her all sorts of things without her asking for them. But otherwise Adelaide couldn't see much that was attractive in the idea of marrying him. He never read anything but newspapers and the 'Saturday Evening Post'; he had no interesting ideas; he had been a captain of infantry and had seen some hard service in the war, but to hear him talk one would think he had spent all his time in France having parties with friends whom he was constantly encountering in Paris. He was good-looking in his ruddy, broad-faced way, but he didn't have Roland's distinction of appearance, Roland's dark, frowning, yet not unamiable air of concentration, or Roland's fresh white teeth; so much smoking as Leonard did certainly spoiled the appearance of one's teeth. Adelaide held her cigarette a little longer than usual before putting it again between her lips.

At that moment she was startled by the sudden noiseless appearance upon the veranda, immediately before her, of a young man quite unknown to her. He had taken her thus unawares, first, because in her position the plantation of shrubs had cut off her view of the avenue by which he had approached, and second, because, as his noiseless ascent of the steps had demonstrated, his shoes had rubber heels.

He saw that he had startled her and he spoke with some embarrassment. 'I beg your pardon. I've come hoping I might see Major Kendall for a few moments.'

Adelaide liked his voice, his manner, his clear blue eyes, his wavy brown hair. She said,

'My brother's changing his clothes; he'll be here in a little while. Won't you sit down?'

'Thank you.' He did not take the chair nearest her, nor yet the one farthest away; his discretion pleased her.

'You came upon me rather by surprise,' she said. 'You were so very quiet.'

'It's these snooping shoes.' He cast a rueful glance at them. 'I thought a newspaper man would have to be running round all the time and that rubber heels would make life easier for him. I'm sorry I startled you.'

'It is of no consequence,' said Adelaide. 'Except that I don't like everybody to see me smoking. Some of the parishioners are a bit fussy and old-fashioned. And of course I don't go out of my way to make trouble for Father. You'd hardly be likely to mention my cigarette in your newspaper, would you?'

'Certainly not,' replied the young man.

'I felt sure you wouldn't.' His indignation melted under her smile. 'Won't you smoke?' She held the box of cigarettes out to him.

'If you don't mind, I'll have one of my own.' He smoked in silence, hardly glancing at her; she was a little piqued that he did not choose to talk.

'I don't think you're much of an interviewer,' she observed after a moment.

He brightened instantly. 'Perhaps I'd better get all that I can about your brother from you — before he comes down.'

'No, I've nothing to tell you about him. Each person speaks for himself in this family. But you might just talk to me — just to pass the time. Have you been doing newspaper work very long?'

'About one month. I was lucky to get a job soon after receiving my discharge from the army.'

'You were overseas?'

'No. I was in aviation, and after I was commissioned I was kept on at the training field as an instructor.'

Adelaide's interest which had hitherto been inquisitive became at once respectful.

'That means you were awfully good,' she said. 'They kept the best men for that work, always.'

The young man shrugged his shoulders a trifle but looked pleased.

'How interesting that you should have wanted to go into newspaper work,' continued Adelaide. 'It seems almost as unlikely an occupation for a live young man as teaching — or the ministry.'

'I'm afraid it's almost as poorly paid,' admitted the interviewer. 'At least at the outset.'

'Most of the men I know go into banks or bond houses or become lawyers or doctors. Would you mind telling me how you ever happened to think of a newspaper?'

'For one thing, in college I was always rather interested in writing. And I feel quite strongly about the course we ought to steer — the country, I mean — and I should like to do what I can to get us on the course. Newspapers have a great influence; a newspaper man ought eventually to be able to make his ideas count.'

'I know men who have that sort of ambition,' said Adelaide.

'But they seem to think they'll be most likely to count by becoming lawyers and then going into politics.'

'I suppose it's rather a confession of weakness,' the young man admitted. 'But I should always rather write speeches than deliver them. And I should rather be an observer than an executive, and a critic rather than a congressman.'

'A man who's been in aviation would naturally be a man of action, I should think,' remarked Adelaide.

'Not necessarily. Aviation is for observation, you know.'

'But I can't quite see you deciding to make a career of standing off and looking on.'

'I don't want to do that. A newspaper of the right sort is a power, and the man behind a newspaper of the right sort is a power. Some time I hope to be such a man.'

Adelaide put down her cigarette and sat up in her long wicker chair, clasping her knees in her hands.

'What would you do if you were such a man — had such a power now?' she asked.

'I should do everything I could to make people see we ought to show as a nation the same qualities that we've shown as individuals. We've shown that as individuals we have courage; as a nation we mustn't be timid. We've shown that as individuals we're generous; as a nation we mustn't be mean. We've shown that as individuals we're friendly and well disposed; as a nation we mustn't be suspicious and churlish.' He checked himself abruptly and said with some embarrassment, 'I hadn't meant to get started like this — opening my soul to you in this way. I'm sorry.'

'You needn't be,' Adelaide assured him. She gave him her friendliest smile and added, 'You know what Browning said about the star that had opened its soul to him, don't you?'

His eyes twinkled. '"It has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it."'

'It's hardly a parallel case, of course,' Adelaide hastened to reply. 'Many a time, when a man has suddenly been afraid

he had talked too much about himself I've reassured him with that reference.'

'I feel more tranquil.' His humorous glance met and challenged hers. 'For a moment I was rather agitated. Just starting out in life, you know, — I don't want to do anything rash and precipitate.'

'I've never had my advances treated in just that way before,' Adelaide said demurely.

'And apparently none of the others to whom you made them has ever achieved the final success,' he ventured.

'My first impressions about you were all wrong; I needn't have had the least anxiety.'

'You were anxious about me? Why?'

'I don't know how I could have been so stupid. Perhaps it was your snooping shoes — your being so apologetic for them. I thought, "Poor lamb, what's he doing on a newspaper! He hasn't effrontery enough to succeed." Now to have had that thought about you! I ask you! Imagine!'

'Just fancy! — Will you try one of my cigarettes?'

'No, thank you.'

A maid appeared with a tea-service which she placed on the table at Adelaide's side.

'Such a comfort not to be restricted to war bread any more,' said Adelaide. 'Cream or lemon?'

'Lemon, please,' said the young man; and at that moment Dr. Kendall, who was always punctual in ministering to his appetite, appeared on the veranda.

'Ah, you're all ready for us, I see, my dear,' he observed with satisfaction; he glanced inquiringly at the stranger.

'Father, this is Mr. — Mr. — ' Adelaide looked helplessly at the young man.

'Brent.'

'Yes, of course; thank you, Mr. Brent. Mr. Brent is on the staff of the — really, how stupid I am! What newspaper is it, Mr. Brent?'

'The "Times."'

'Yes, the "Times," of course; thank you. Mr. Brent has called to get an interview with Roger, and instead of that I've been interviewing him.'

Dr. Kendall shook hands with the young man cordially.

'I am always glad to meet a representative of the fourth estate,' he said. He sank into a comfortable chair and elevated his hands in front of him, finger-tip resting against finger-tip. 'It was Burke, was it not, who thus characterized you gentlemen of the press?'

Brent believed that it was Burke, though the occasion of the utterance had escaped him.

'Poor Mr. Brent; he never saw us before, and the first thing we do is to quote Burke and Browning for him!' said Adelaide. 'And I'm the frivolous member of my highbrow family, Mr. Brent.'

'Less frivolous than you might suppose, Mr. Brent,' said her father. 'She did her part in the war — as, I trust, did every member of our family. And permit me to say that your paper the "Times" rendered yeoman service.'

'Mr. Brent himself was rendering yeoman service elsewhere than on the "Times,"' said Adelaide.

Her father did not heed the interpolation.

'In this country the press generally did a splendid work,' he continued. 'The press and the pulpit coöperated admirably; they were the two great inspirational forces. But I fear that it was only a temporary alliance. Now that peace has come, though all the clergy continue to read the daily press, I rather think there are very few newspaper men who listen once a week to words from the pulpit.'

'Oh, I dare say they go to church as much now as they did in wartime,' remarked Adelaide.

'I doubt it,' replied her father. 'At any rate there is a distinct lowering of tone in their work — a distinct falling off in idealism and reverence.' He sipped his tea gloomily.

'Reverence, Mr. Brent — that is the great need in our life to-day, and there is no quality more conspicuously absent. Amazing that it should be so after we had only a few months ago attained such glorious heights of idealism.'

'Don't you think it's only a temporary slump?' asked Brent. 'A more or less natural reaction after our great effort?'

'I wish I could think so. No, Mr. Brent, we have the spectacle of the natural American reasserting himself, in all his gross materialism. No reverence, no self-control, no self-denial. Why is it that you gentlemen of the press can't co-operate with the churches in peace as you did in war? We need your help in our inspirational work.'

'I'm sure that Mr. Brent will be of the greatest help just as soon as he gets full control of his newspaper,' said Adelaide. 'He hasn't quite a free hand yet. I hope he will have in a short time. Another cup of tea, Mr. Brent?'

'No, thank you.'

Adelaide, relieving him of his empty cup, gave him her most gracious smile, her most heart-warming, friendly glance; she felt that her father's censorious utterances had cast a gloom over the young man and she wanted to dissipate it. Had she required assistance in the execution of her design, the appearance of the other members of her family in the next few moments would have supplied it. Mrs. Kendall, full of kindly, hospitable interest, ascertained at once that Mr. Brent was almost a stranger in the city, having come to it from his home in a small town forty miles away. Laura learned that like her brother he was a graduate of Yale, and Roger, after first declining flatly to say anything for publication, suddenly exclaimed,

'Yes, I will too; I'll give you an interview and gladly, and it will be about our fellow-citizen, Chaplain Hoyt. People here should know something about his record. He wasn't a chaplain that felt it his duty to censor the morals of the men and to hold lamentation exercises over those that went

astray. He was just unobtrusively friendly and helpful. I think he spent nearly all his funds on special supplies and luxuries for the sick and wounded; and every fellow that was in trouble because of bad news from home went to him for help and comfort. Then one day bad news from home came to him. His wife had volunteered as a nurse here during the influenza epidemic. She took the disease and in less than a week was dead.

'We were in the front-line trenches when he got the message. He came to my dug-out that night and talked to me about his wife. "She died giving help," he said. "She died as she had lived."

'At dawn, we made our attack. We didn't catch the Germans unprepared, and there were a couple of machine-gun nests that raked us as we advanced. We reached our objective, but we left dead and wounded on the field. Hoyt went out and brought in one man, shot through the leg; a second time he went out under fire and brought in a poor fellow dying with a bullet through his lung. Then we outflanked the machine-gun nests and silenced them, and rescued the others of our wounded. I think that Hoyt had hoped he might die that day, giving help. He got the D.S.C., and there wasn't a more popular award in the regiment. — Now that I've told you the story I doubt if it's one you can use.'

'I think I can do something with it,' Brent answered. 'Of course I shall try to handle it in a way that won't be painful to Mr. Hoyt.'

'He shrinks from publicity, I know.'

'You rather shrink from it yourself, don't you, Major Kendall?' Brent said. 'Anything about your own experiences or observations — the "Times" would be glad to have it.'

'No, nothing of interest,' said Roger. 'Absolutely nothing. A commonplace record.'

'You will find the situation in this country most discouraging,' Dr. Kendall said. He tapped the tips of his

fingers together and moved his head slowly from side to side. 'It seems almost as if the recoil to materialism since the Armistice has hit our soldiers as well as our civilian population. You gentlemen of the press have a great responsibility, Mr. Brent. You mustn't leave it to the churches alone to keep alive the spirit of idealism among our people. The press must coöperate with the pulpit — not desert it, in the hour of trial. It's for you, sir, and me and all of us to do what we can to re-awaken the mind and heart of America.'

Brent rose. 'It will be a long time before I can hope to wield your influence, Dr. Kendall.'

'Oh, each man must do what he can, to the best of his ability and in the place to which it has pleased God to call him.' Dr. Kendall graciously ignored Brent's appeal to him not to get up; he rose in a slow and dignified manner and gave the interviewer his hand. Brent thanked Roger Kendall for his kindness in furnishing material for an article, and then turned to take leave, collectively, of the rest of the family.

'Good-bye,' they chimed in a silvery chorus; 'so glad to have seen you.' And then as he was going down the steps the most chiming and silvery voice of all called to him,

'Do come again, Mr. Brent.'

Dr. Kendall turned to Roger. 'That's an interesting story that you told about Hoyt. It makes me wish I could give him a lift in some way. His church here — he has done no doubt as well as any one could with it, but it's just the kind of parish to make a man of any talent groan. Dull, commonplace people — none of the sort that rouse missionary zeal in a man and none of the sort that can supply breadth of view or culture or ideas. You know what the South Side is — poor, and yet no slums. Small shopkeepers, clerks, low-salaried people — unsuccessful but respectable. Not a congregation likely to prepare its minister to take charge of a parish in a more highly civilized community. But Hoyt with his war record — that makes him attractive. Perhaps I can help him to something better, eventually.'

'I think he's probably content to work among the people that know him and like him. I suppose they're as much in need of whatever religious message he can bring them as anybody else.'

'Oh, I didn't mean to imply that their souls might as well be sacrificed in order that others might be benefited.' Dr. Kendall laughed tolerantly. 'But the man of exceptional abilities has an obligation to make the most of himself — and Hoyt can hardly do that while he stays where he is. A commonplace congregation can get on very well with a commonplace clergyman. Hoyt should have his chance.'

After Dr. Kendall had returned to his study to work on his sermon, and Mrs. Kendall, with basket and shears, had gone into the garden, Roger said to his sisters, 'Father ought to be a bishop; he's too lordly a personage to be just a rector of a church.'

'It's growing on him,' said Adelaide. 'Laura doesn't like me to comment on it though; she thinks it's disrespectful.'

'No, not exactly that,' said Laura. 'But it doesn't seem to me quite right to be always criticizing and laughing at one's father.'

'But, my dear, I don't do it to any one but you! And I have to be either thinking it to myself or saying it out loud to you, and I can't see that one is any worse than the other. For some reason you've decided it's all right to think it but not to say it.'

'I don't mean that I'm perfectly satisfied with my own behavior,' replied Laura. 'I have a horrid feeling that if you always notice a person's faults and watch for them you lose your love for him. And I have no doubt that I notice Father's faults just as much as Adelaide does.'

'So long as you're more amused than annoyed by them you needn't worry,' said Roger.

'But I'm usually more annoyed than amused,' said Laura, wrinkling her fair brow in a frown.

'Are people drifting away from his church?'

'No, I think not,' Adelaide answered. 'I think they like him. Probably a good many of them find his grand air inspiring. Perhaps it's a horrid snobbish thing to say, but I believe that people like to attend a church of which the rector has distinct social prestige.'

'The admiration of the women and the indifference of the men must between them spoil many a minister,' remarked Roger sententiously. 'And with so many of the men away the last two years, I suppose that the admiration of the women has made Father more pontifical than ever.'

'My feeling is that he ought to have had a career in public life,' said Adelaide. 'He'd have been a noble senator!'

'There's no use in speculating on what he might have been,' replied Roger. 'If he satisfies his congregation and incites them to good works, he has at least justified his choice of a profession.'

'Yes, and he's quite happy in it, and we ought to be thankful for that,' said Laura.

'Of late he's seemed happier than usual,' remarked Adelaide thoughtfully. 'I've wondered what it portends.'

'Surely my home-coming should be reason enough,' expostulated Roger.

'Yes, but I suspect he's carrying something in the back of his head. You know the manner that one has when one is holding a pleasant secret not yet ripe for revealing. He's hatching something, I'm sure.' Adelaide settled a cushion comfortably and decisively behind her shoulders.

'You always had a suspicious nature, Adelaide,' said Laura.

'No, my dear; merely an acute mind. Have you prepared your lesson for your Church School class to-morrow?'

Laura thrust her tongue out at her sister. 'Cat!' she said, and took her departure.

'You don't teach a class?' asked Roger.

'No. I help in the outing parties and the concerts and

entertainments that the church is forever having, but — oh, well, I see it in your eye, Roger; you think I don't do my full duty.'

'I don't know anything about it,' Roger replied, 'and now that I'm out of the army the obligation of seeing that some one else does his full duty doesn't rest heavily on me.'

'You and I are misfits in a clergyman's family, Roger. Clergymen's sons are notorious for their bad habits, and clergymen's daughters are usually everything that is lovely and of good report.'

'You know nothing about my habits,' Roger reminded her, 'and I have yet to hear any bad reports about you. Don't be discouraged, Adelaide. Some young man will yet find you everything that is lovely.'

'How you do return to that theme! If you had to make the perfectly inconceivable choice between Roland Wagoner and Leonard Warder, which one would you choose?'

'I don't like to assume the responsibility of answering such a question.'

'Even when I say that they're both of them impossible?'

'If you really felt they were, you wouldn't be interested in getting my opinion.'

'No,' Adelaide admitted candidly after a moment, 'that's true. I suppose that what I want is to be persuaded that one of them is not impossible.'

'I see no reason why either of them should be, but I should never undertake to persuade you of the fact.'

'Poor fellows!' sighed Adelaide. 'I did think that as they're friends of yours you might be disposed to help one of them along. And I should rather like to get myself engaged; it would be such a pleasure to Aunt Harriet.'

'That's a rather remote reason. Why not say a pleasure to Mother, if you're considering the effect on others besides yourself?'

'Because I'm not sure that it would be. Any engagement

would delight Aunt Harriet —any, I mean, that fell within her own social circle. But Mother's more intelligent — and more inscrutable. I'm not sure that she wouldn't be perfectly content to have Laura and me work out our careers as single women. She's the perfect wife and mother — and yet I'm not at all sure that she believes the highest happiness is to be found in marriage and motherhood.'

'What's your own feeling about it?'

'Oh, I still have the romantic longing to be swept off my feet by the one and only man. But if he doesn't put in an appearance pretty soon I shall have to do something deliberately for myself. I'm finding life empty since the war, Roger. During the War I was busy all the time, and if I say it myself, I did good work. But now there isn't any particular field for my services that I've been able to discover, and here at home I seem to become more and more conscious of pretensions and futilities — and I can't help wondering sometimes whether I hadn't better choose almost any way out.'

'Have you any special way in mind? It sounds horribly as if you might be contemplating suicide.'

'Nothing so drastic. I seem to be rather good with my hands — knitting, making surgical dressings, anything of that sort. And I think I kept the crowd of women I worked with pretty well on the job; we had pretty good team play. But when it comes to putting my particular talents to use in time of peace, being forewoman in a millinery shop is about the only job I can think of for which I might qualify. And I don't find that idea alluring.'

'No,' said Roger. 'You want to have the stimulus of feeling that whatever your work is, it isn't altogether trivial.'

'That's it exactly. You don't know how I envy you, Roger; your mind is trained, your work is waiting for you — and when you go back to the practice of the law I suppose you'll be serving the cause of justice in peace just as you've been serving it in war. But we little poor half-educated women who

for a while could put our hands and our hearts into service and thrilled at being of service — what are we to do now? We can't be satisfied with the old mild routine. If we can't go on being happily useful, we shall probably try to forget our uselessness by going in more and more for excitement.' Adelaide rose and gathered up her cigarette case and match-safe. 'It's time I was dressing for dinner.'

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Markham, arriving half an hour later, greeted their nephew with a warmth of affection hardly second to that which had been bestowed upon him by his immediate family. A childless couple, they had always taken a keen interest in Roger and his sisters and were demonstrative of it according to their several temperaments. Mrs. Markham, stout, florid, brimming with vitality, grappled him to her bosom, thrust him off at arm's length, laughed ecstatically, and then drawing him close again, planted a violent kiss on each cheek. When she let him go, her husband, a thin, tall man, hawklike and dyspeptic of countenance, took his hand and pressed it gently and said, 'It's good to see you again, my dear boy.' Cocktails were passed; Mrs. Markham and the two girls each took one; Mr. Markham, hesitating, cast an inquiring glance at the host who, aware of the regulations concerning food and drink to which his brother-in-law had to submit, said deprecatingly, 'We're having a little something rather special with dinner to-night — to celebrate the occasion.'

'Then I shall have to let Harriet have my cocktail,' said Mr. Markham; it was a familiar jest but they all laughed merrily.

'I'll give it to Roger along with another little thing that I have for him,' said Mrs. Markham, and when she had emptied her glass she set it down and took up the one that her husband had declined. 'Here, Roger,' she said, 'swallow this first and then see what I've brought you.'

'I've always been an obedient nephew,' said Roger. He

performed the required task. 'Now, Aunt Harriet, I'm ready for my reward.'

Mrs. Markham drew from her velvet bag a small morocco leather case. 'Here, my dear,' she said, and she watched him anxiously while he opened it and disclosed a large pearl scarf-pin.

'How gorgeous!' exclaimed Roger, and his mother and sisters uttered cries of admiration.

'It seemed quite a good pearl,' said Mrs. Markham, obviously much pleased by the reception accorded to her gift. 'And I'm told that scarf-pins are still worn, if only they're pearls and good ones — isn't that right, Roger?'

'Perfectly right, I'm sure. This one will certainly be worn. Put it in for me, please, Aunt Harriet.'

He stood before her and she fastened the pin in his cravat, which she then poked and patted into place.

'There!' she said. 'There's nothing like a pearl pin to finish a man off. It wouldn't be of any use to give you one, Damon; you haven't any place to wear it.'

'Some of the clergy are adopting secular dress,' replied Dr. Kendall. 'This is rather a temptation for me to fall into line. But even if I did, a pearl in the pulpit would be rather unbecoming, I think.'

'But they fall so often from your lips, Father,' said Adelaide.

'My child, don't be pert. Your sister never makes such cutting remarks.'

'I might if Adelaide wasn't always so ready with them,' Laura said.

For the first meal that Roger was to eat at home in nearly two years, the stateliest family silver and the most precious family china were brought into use; elaborate dishes had been prepared; the champagne that foamed in the long-stemmed Venetian glasses was Pol Roger, 1911; Dr. Kendall informed his son that he had laid in a dozen cases of that notable vintage.

Familiar as the dining-room was to Roger, with its carved oak panels and cornices and beamed ceiling, its tapestries, its frieze of Sevres and old Japan Derby plates, its heavy bronze sconces, his presence there seemed more strange to him than if there had been some striking alteration in the scene. Accompanying this sense of strangeness was a feeling that he must begin all over again to try to know the members of his family. But his father dominated the conversation, broke in unceremoniously on little passages that promised to be enlightening, harangued and expounded; the strategy of the war, the diplomacy of the peace — large, dull subjects; he became more insistently dogmatic with the refilling of his glass.

After dinner Roger and his father and his uncle smoked in Dr. Kendall's study. There Robert Markham announced,

'I think of reëntering politics, Damon.'

'Eh?' said Dr. Kendall, 'what's that?'

'I may go after the Republican nomination for the Senate next year. Some of the party leaders have been talking with me about it. The fact that I served two terms in Congress and then retired to become counsel for the railroad — that will be used against me, I suppose, but with a good many people it will be a recommendation. When the time comes — if it does — I shall need an intelligent, alert person to help me. How should you like to act as my secretary, Roger?'

'It would be an interesting job,' Roger said, 'but I think I had better try to pick up the threads of my law practice.'

'You could go back to that without much loss later. And it will be a good experience for you if you are thinking some time of going into politics yourself. Men of your sort are needed, you know.'

'It's rather interesting, Robert, that you and I are likely to be somewhat in the public eye at about the same time,' remarked Dr. Kendall. 'I suppose I may as well confide my secret to you and Roger — though it's not to be talked of outside the family circle. In fact, I haven't told the girls yet — only Mary.'

Roger looked at his father apprehensively, mindful of the suspicion to which Adelaide so short a time before had given utterance. Dr. Kendall, enjoying his cigar and reclining at ease in his deep leather chair, did not keep him long in suspense.

'Bishop Addison sent for me a few days ago. His health is not very good, as perhaps you know, Robert; he is getting on in years, and he has decided to resign next spring, when he shall have completed his tenth year as bishop of the diocese. He told me that he hoped I should be chosen to succeed him, and that he would use his best efforts in my behalf.'

'Good!' said Markham. 'You'll make an excellent bishop, Damon; you have the presence and the worldly as well as the spiritual equipment.'

Dr. Kendall waved a deprecating hand.

'Of course Bishop Addison's good will is not tantamount to election. I trust that I don't covet the honor for honor's sake. It is something I have aspired to in the idea that it would increase my opportunities for usefulness.'

'Yes, at our age we don't have much vanity about such matters,' said Markham. 'We want to hold office because we have some ideas that we want to put across. I want to go to the Senate to work for a close alliance between this country and England, and to do what I can to give relief to the railroads — which means incidentally the people. I suppose you have several definite aims, too, that your election as bishop will help you to realize.'

'Church unity is one: you know how I have always advocated a closer coöperation of the churches. And broader educational opportunities for those wishing to enter the ministry; I believe that there is a work to be done in that field and that as bishop I could render good service.'

'Your parish here will miss you, Damon. They won't find it easy to fill your place.'

'I hope the people are sufficiently attached to me to feel some regret if I should have to leave them. But as for filling

my place, I dare say that won't be so difficult. In fact, Roger, this evening I've thought of the man I should like to see installed as my successor.'

'Who is that?' Roger asked.

'Our friend Hoyt. I believe that in time he would adapt himself to the change.'

'I don't doubt it. I'm not sure, though, that it would be altogether congenial to him.'

Dr. Kendall's eyes seemed to grow rounder and his lips to form a circle expressive of astonishment.

'Not congenial — to be rector of the most important parish in the city! That ought to be a congenial position for any clergyman who has the necessary background and personality. I am free to say that I should never have thought of Hoyt for the place were it not for his war record. But that will predispose every one in his favor, and he will have time to adjust himself and make his best qualities felt.'

'He's spent nearly all his life working with and for the poor and humble; he might not be attracted by a call to this rich and, as you say, important parish.'

'He would probably not resist it. In the interest of his own development he should accept it. Of course I can do nothing more than try to help him; if he doesn't choose to accept opportunities when they are offered — but that hardly seems credible of a man who has shown such spirit and initiative in war. — At any rate, Robert, you and I seem likely to be candidates for high office within a comparatively short time. And I imagine that we can be of some assistance to each other.'

'Of course whatever influence I may have in church affairs will be exerted in your behalf, Damon.'

'Mother, I suppose, was delighted when you told her you were in line to be made a bishop,' said Roger.

'Oh, tremendously so. She looked up at me with her eyes shining and said, "That *will* please you, won't it, dear."'

Dr. Kendall sat with his head tilted back, smiling over the gratifying memory.

Roger glanced apprehensively towards his uncle, expecting to catch a gleam of cynical amusement in his eyes. But like Dr. Kendall, Robert Markham sat in what appeared to be an agreeable oblivion, absorbed wholly in his own plans and purposes and his excellent cigar.

III

Morning sunshine, songs of birds, fragrance of spring drew Roger from his bed at an early hour. He shaved, and then before an open window overlooking the driveway embarked upon the calisthenics that were the prelude to his bath. He had done about half the exercises and was raising first one knee and then the other as high in the air and as rapidly as possible, when the appearance of his father on the driveway below brought him to a sudden halt. Dr. Kendall, clad now in ministerial black, was striding briskly away from the house, tapping on the gravel with his walking stick. He was on his way, as Roger at once knew, to conduct the early Communion service at Saint Paul's.

Roger stood for a moment watching him with both admiration and sympathy, so vigorous, so confident, and so lonely did he seem. It was his loneliness that at the moment struck Roger most forcibly. 'At least one of the family ought to accompany him,' he thought, and he reproached himself for not having charged his mind with that duty. He resumed the exercises at a slower pace, pondering on the lack of support that the head of the house received from his family in the performance of his duties. But as profound thought and vigorous physical exercise cannot well be maintained simultaneously, Roger soon concentrated his attention upon the count and beat of his movements; not until he had come downstairs and entered the dining-room did his mind turn again to his father. Then the sight of the recently used breakfast dishes at his father's place created in him astonishment and a curious vague feeling of dismay. It was not at all their untidy, unwashed appearance that affected him; the evidence that his father had eaten breakfast before setting forth to the communion service was, for all its triviality, appalling.

In all Roger's memory of his father, nothing was more firmly imbedded than the impression of his unvarying, austere abstinence from food and drink on Sunday mornings until after he had returned from partaking of and administering the symbolic bread and wine. From Roger's earliest years he had been led to believe that to eat and drink immediately before participating in those holy rites was an impious act. Now before his eyes was the mute testimony to an extensive impiety, perpetrated in fruit and cereal and eggs and toast and coffee. Further hinting at demoralization, the Sunday newspaper lay beside the unwashed dishes, sufficiently disarranged to necessitate the inference that it had at least been glanced at.

Roger collected the materials for his breakfast at the sideboard and seating himself at the table drew the Sunday newspaper to him. While he ate he turned the pages, searching for his interview. He found it occupying a column under the heading, 'Tribute to Gallant Chaplain. Major Kendall Tells of Rev. Caspar Hoyt's Heroism.' Roger read the article and felt that the reporter had done his work skillfully, that he had embellished his own bald narrative without resorting to rhetorical flourish or fulsome eulogy; in short Roger felt gratitude instead of resentment towards the interviewer. There was surely nothing in the account to which Hoyt could take exception, and the story as told was certain to enhance the clergyman's prestige.

Rustling pleasantly in pink, Adelaide entered the room, grazed Roger's cheek with the lightest of kisses, and gathered up the newspaper from under his eyes.

'Where's our famous interview?' she cried. 'Ah, right here, to be sure, just where one might expect.' Roger politely supplied her with food, but she ignored it, absorbed in the article. 'Why,' she said at last, 'I think our young friend has done a very nice piece of work. Something about him gave me confidence that he would.' She proceeded to eat her

breakfast. 'I wonder,' she said after a moment, 'how it is that you know almost at once, when you meet a person, whether he has delicacy of feeling, or whether he hasn't?'

'It is one of the things that one feels,' agreed Roger. 'Perhaps because the mouth and eyes always indicate it.'

'But why should they? Anyway I think it's more than that — something almost like an emanation of personality. I am sure I could sit blindfold and know from the sound of the voice whether a person had the quality or not.'

'You're probably more sensitive to it than most people.'

'I wish I were not. Life would be much less vexatious.'

'Is it very vexatious?'

'Oh, sometimes. But let's not go into that. — Here come Mother and Laura.'

Mrs. Kendall brought an atmosphere of benign dignity and repose into the room. She greeted her children affectionately, lingered by Roger's chair to lay her hand on his head and press him gently down as he struggled — not too desperately — to rise, and said, 'You know our Sunday morning rule, Roger; everybody looks after himself.'

'You'll spoil him, Mother,' said Laura. 'I'm sure he'd like to be polite to the ladies of his family, after having been away from them so long.'

'He's been heavenly polite waiting on me,' said Adelaide. 'Here, Mother' — she pushed the newspaper across the table — 'here's the most interesting thing in the "Times" today.'

Mrs. Kendall scanned the article rapidly with Laura looking over her shoulder. 'The reporter did his work very well, don't you think so? His story of why Mr. Hoyt was decorated is quite inspiring.'

'It will make Hoyt's parishioners pleased and proud, even if he doesn't care for it much himself,' said Roger.

'Why shouldn't he care for it?' Mrs. Kendall poured her coffee and placed a slice of bread on the rack of the electric

toaster. 'I feel sure that a man, no matter how modest and retiring he may be, always likes to have his good work publicly recognized. There's nothing that pleases your dear father more than praise.'

Adelaide giggled, Laura uttered a hushed and horrified 'Adelaide!' Their mother sipped her coffee with serenity. Roger felt nettled, but he spoke in a tone of good humor.

'What's the war done to this family?' he asked. 'Its team-play isn't what it used to be. I looked out of my window while I was dressing, and saw Father tramping all by his lone to church, when in the old days Mother and at least one daughter, if not a son, would have been with him. Does he always go now unattended, like that?'

'I've given up going to the early Communion service,' said Mrs. Kendall.

'I go sometimes,' said Laura.

'I never go,' said Adelaide.

'What is it — a rebellion in the household?' asked Roger.

'No, just an amicable difference of opinion.' Mrs. Kendall dipped her egg out of the water in which it had been boiling and withdrew her toast from the rack. 'Your father now regards the Communion service as simply part of the machinery of religion — one of the formalities. Rather than be present when it's celebrated in that manner I stay away.'

'What has caused such a change in his attitude? I remember the time when he wouldn't touch food or read anything so secular as a newspaper before celebrating the Communion.'

'I only know that he has no such scruples now.'

'But don't you think, Mother, that the family ought to give him their support? Even if they do think that his conduct of the service is perfunctory?'

'I have no desire to influence you or the girls, Roger.'

He looked at her, puzzled by her calm disclosure of her

fundamental lack of sympathy with her husband. She guessed what was in his mind, and said quickly,

'If I felt that it was of any special value or support to your father that I should continue to attend the early service I should do it. He doesn't know why I prefer to stay away. I asked him if he cared particularly whether I went to it or not, and he said, "Not in the least" and expressed the opinion that I'd better stay in bed and rest. He's always very thoughtful in such ways.'

'Still,' Roger persisted, 'it would probably please him to have at least one member of the family accompany him to the service.'

'I certainly shan't attempt to dissuade you,' said his mother.

'I admit I have no call to be reproaching any one else for neglect of duty,' Roger said.

'Now is the time to do it if you're ever going to,' observed Adelaide. 'You're ever so much more authoritative in that uniform, Roger, than you are in civilian clothes. And I suppose this is your last appearance in it?'

'Positively.'

'I like you just as well in your other clothes, Roger,' said Laura.

'I'm not sure that I don't like him better in them,' said Adelaide. 'But if he wants to overawe me about anything, he'd better try to do it to-day.'

'Laura's the only member of this family that might be soft-hearted enough to let me overawe her if I tried,' said Roger.

'Yes, but you've never wanted to do anything like that to me since you grew up,' Laura said. 'I'm not at all alarmed.'

In spite of his perplexed feeling that the domestic harmony which he had always accepted as an immutable fact had somehow been shattered, he found it hard to believe that any one of the three persons breakfasting with him was seriously culpable. He could not believe it of his mother, who had

always personified for him magnanimity and broadmindedness; those qualities showed in her very presence, in the serenity of her eyes, the pleasant curve of her lips, her deliberateness and accuracy of speech and movement. And as for Laura, with her sweet seriousness, her grave gray eyes that looked out so honestly from under her broad brows, it was impossible to think that she could ever introduce a spirit of discord. Adelaide was critical of people, sometimes mischievously disposed, yet even when she had been most bent on mischief it had always been with a reassuring twinkle, an intimation of kindly and affectionate warmth for the destined victim.

The family had all left the dining-room before Dr. Kendall returned. Laura withdrew to the library to con her Church School lesson over once more; Mrs. Kendall moved about in the garden, snipping here and there with her pruning shears; Adelaide and Roger arrived at an amicable arrangement over the sections of the Sunday newspaper and sat down on the veranda reading and smoking in silence. Their father, coming up the steps, addressed them with an indulgent heartiness.

'Well, lazy bones! I suppose there wasn't one of this family awake when I left the house.'

'I was up but not dressed,' said Roger. 'Next time I'll try to get an earlier start.'

'Have you read the nice interview that Mr. Brent has printed in this morning's "Times"?' asked Adelaide, offering the section of the newspaper containing it to her father.

'Yes, I glanced at it while I was eating breakfast. I felt he hadn't done as much with his material as he might have.'

'It produced just the opposite effect on me,' said Roger. 'I was surprised that he'd been able to make as much out of it as he did.'

'It lacked background and atmosphere,' was Dr. Kendall's comment. He grasped his stick behind him with both hands and rose two or three times on the balls of his feet while he

spoke. 'He should have placed you definitely; there's no suggestion anywhere as to who you are. If the fact that you are my son had been mentioned, the article would have been likely to mean more to a good many readers. And a brief description of the circumstances under which he interviewed you would have added to the interest — if the young man has any gift for descriptive writing. I hoped that he would put into the article the observations I made to him about the necessity for the press to give more effective support to the church — about the need for a revival of reverence in the world to-day. — But no matter. You appear to good advantage in the sketch, Roger; and I'm glad that poor Hoyt should receive such warm praise from you publicly.'

Dr. Kendall passed into the house.

Presently they heard him as he rehearsed his sermon in his study; no words came to them distinctly, but only the louder tones of his voice, carrying in their mellow sound a suggestion of appealing eloquence. The chauffeur brought up the car to take Laura to Church School; she came out presently carrying her Bible with markers sticking out of it; she was quite grave and intent, and as soon as she took her seat she bent over her Bible and was studying it when the car swept round the curve in the avenue and out of sight.

Roger joined his mother in the garden; they brought in sprays of spirea, and Roger stood by and watched while she deftly arranged them in the vases. 'Just finished in good time,' she said at last with satisfaction. 'I've just time enough to get ready comfortably for church.'

'And I've just time enough to get my hat properly put on,' remarked Adelaide, rising from her chair and casting down her novel.

Dr. Kendall did not wait for them; he felt it always necessary to address the Church School before the superintendent's closing prayer. Roger offered to accompany him when he came briskly out of the house, but his father did not respond

very warmly to the suggestion. 'You'd better come with your mother and Adelaide. Besides, I find that walking alone to church I'm very apt to have some last-minute inspiration.'

So, at five minutes of eleven Roger entered the motor car and seated himself beside his mother and sister, and at one minute of eleven he stepped out of it in front of Saint Paul's Church. The steps and the walk leading up to them were crowded with worshipers who had timed their arrival with equal nicety; Roger was surrounded by old friends eager to greet him; there were the Mastermans, the Coles, the Bemises. As he drew near the steps of the church, he became aware of the young woman in deep mourning who stood at one side with eyes fixed eagerly on him. She was pale, her face had a delicate, fragile beauty that sadness had perhaps robbed of its luster; strength and sensitiveness together were to be read in its lines.

'I hoped I should see you — in fact, I've been waiting here for fifteen minutes in the hope of seeing you,' she said when Roger came forward and took her hand. Her hazel eyes shone with a soft appeal. 'I'm so anxious to have a talk with you, Major Kendall. Would it be too much to ask you to come in this afternoon for tea?'

'Surely, Mrs. Ashton, I shall be glad to,' said Roger. Yet an interview with Isabel Ashton was the one thing to which he had looked forward with dread while returning from France.

He followed his mother and sister into the church, into their pew, which was about one third of the way up the main aisle. Isabel Ashton moved slowly on to her seat near the pulpit.

Evidently, thought Roger as he glanced round the great Church, his father had not lost his hold upon the congregation. There were few vacant pews, and there were few whose occupants did not exhale the aroma of prosperity. It seemed fitting that this should be so, in a church that was as dignified

and imposing as Saint Paul's. The very feeling of the carpet beneath one's feet as one walked up the aisle gave one a sense of luxury, it was so soft, velvety, comfortable. The light that streamed through the lofty stained-glass windows was a mellow and comfortable light, and under it the polished mahogany of the pews, the red damask-covered cushions of the seats, the brass of lectern and candelabra and organ-pipes shone with a soft luster. The pulpit was of carved marble; the choir stalls and chancel screen were of mahogany richly embossed; behind the altar was a marble reredos of delicate chasing.

High overhead the vaulted stone work of the church was austere and cold. But the service did not require the worshipers to look aloft; whether they knelt with bowed heads or sat with roving or attentive eyes, they could not but be conscious of the pleasant stimulation of the senses that their surroundings produced. One could hardly help deriving the impression that Christianity was a pleasant, friendly, prosperous religion, that kindness and comfort were its distinguishing characteristics, and that with so much thoughtful ministering to the satisfaction of the senses the problem of ministering to the spirit assumed no undue importance. Many persons, not regular attendants at Saint Paul's, went there to hear the singing and the organ music — the best that was to be heard in the city; or they went for the enjoyment of the scene, its rich harmony, its decorative effects.

Among these decorative effects and by no means the least of them the Reverend Damon Kendall was to be counted. Following the choristers as they entered singing the processional hymn, he walked with his hands clasped in front of his breast, his face canted slightly upward, his eyes half closed — a figure of rapt devotion. Roger was startled to find how uncomfortable this entrance of his father made him. His discomfort did not grow less as the service proceeded; at no time did his father seem wholly natural and simple; in every

utterance he was theatrical. Roger wondered whether ecclesiastical mannerisms had always characterized his father's conduct of the service or whether on account of long absence he himself had only now become sensitive to them. Certainly Dr. Kendall's reading of the prayers was more unctuously rhetorical, his intoning of the creed more curiously artificial than formerly.

Dr. Kendall ascended into the pulpit during the singing of the last stanza of 'Jerusalem the Golden' and stood with hands clasped before his breast and eyes turned upward until the last note of the 'Amen' had died away. Then, after the grace, he announced his text impressively: 'And lo, a voice from heaven saying, Behold, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'

Roger stiffened in his seat, aware almost instantly that he was the object of furtive glances. Adelaide sitting next to him, unobtrusively slid her hand along the cushion and nudged him.

'You all recall the circumstances under which Jesus heard his father's voice,' began Dr. Kendall. 'He had just been baptized by John in the river Jordan, and when he came out from the water he saw the spirit of the Lord descending; then he heard those words of blessing and confirmation issuing from the heavens above.

'Now perhaps to some of us the thought will come that a message of such direct, divine assurance vouchsafed to Jesus at the very outset of his career made his mission easier than it otherwise would have been. Perhaps some of us feel that we could bear our earthly trials with greater equanimity if we had been fortified in the beginning with a similar direct revelation of the fatherhood of God — of his care and concern for us, his approval of us, his assurance that he would be with us to the end. How it would simplify the problems of life — and death — for us if we could each one have such a divine revelation! And sometimes perhaps we ask why Jesus, who

did not need it, should have received it, while we, who need it so much, should have to struggle along with no message or manifestation to strengthen our faltering hearts.

'And yet' — Dr. Kendall raised his right hand and shook his index finger, not menacingly but earnestly at the congregation — 'and yet to each one of us, if we but recognized it, has come again and again a similar divine manifestation. We hear no voice crying out to us from the heavens above — but we hear a voice speaking within us. When we have done well, the message that the inner voice delivers is one of approval and assurance. When we feel a just satisfaction in our work, the inner voice tells us that for the occasion at least we have satisfied our maker. When there is only ill-doing, there is no such message of satisfaction. Where there is worldly success achieved without rendering a service to others, there is no such inner satisfaction.'

Dr. Kendall continued for some minutes to elaborate this thought; then he turned to a discussion of the place that the idea of service holds in the Christian faith.

'Service to man is service to God. It is no more possible to serve man and mammon than it is to serve God and mammon. The great industrial leader in our modern civilization is a servant of man rather than of mammon; he produces and distributes wealth for the benefit of mankind and improves the conditions under which men live; it is in the achievement of such purposes rather than in the acquisition of wealth for its own sake that his interest lies, and modern Christianity recognizes him as one who, serving man, serves God. Not of such as he was it said, "Thou canst not serve God and mammon," nor of the professional man, the lawyer or the surgeon, the architect or the engineer, not of any one who by his labor, whether his gains be great or small, performs a useful service to his fellow men. Only the more disinterested the service to man, the dearer we may assume it to be to God.

'And it is a recognition of that fact that has in the last four years brought humility to so many of us, whatever our vocation, who had been content in the consciousness that in our own way and degree we were serving God. For we saw an opportunity for disinterested service arise such as had never occurred before in our lifetime, but we were too old, we were too unfit, we were too heavily burdened with responsibilities to seize it, and we had to look on while the young men of the land went forth and dedicated themselves to the cause of human freedom and justice, to the service of mankind and of God. And some of them underwent the baptism of fire; and can we not imagine that to them coming forth from that baptism the voice of the Lord spoke — not crying aloud from the sky, but quietly in every heart, comforting, strengthening, assuring each one of the Divine rejoicing in his service, and of the immanence of the Divine love!

'And those who fell in the service — we may rest assured that as their bodies fell their souls sprang exultant into the everlasting arms. I hold the sure and firm conviction that while some of us may have to undergo a period of probation before being admitted to the sphere of perfect love, those young men were instantly rapt up into heaven even as was Elijah. To all those who have been bereft of sons or brothers or husbands by the war I would say, "Great is your pride; greater still be your comfort."

'We know not how deep is our love of one dear to us until the life of the dear one is threatened or taken away. All through this country love has suffered a quaking and received a quickening by reason of the war. All through this country war has disclosed to the people the deeper meaning of their love. And I say it in all reverence and with a full heart, in the last three months, in the supreme moment of joyous reunion, how many thankful, happy hearts have echoed that heavenly voice that spoke to Jesus saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."'

Dr. Kendall after a moment's pause raised his right hand, closed his eyes, and began,

'And now to God the Father — '

Roger standing with the rest of the congregation bowed his head in embarrassment as much as in piety. He was wishing that he had not worn his uniform in deference to his father's request; he felt that it emphasized the personal application of the sermon. But most oppressive of all was the feeling that people on going home from church would be exclaiming, 'What poor taste for Dr. Kendall to drag his son in! What shockingly poor taste to make the use that he did of his text!' He understood now his mother's attitude, Adelaide's attitude.

They were seated again; Dr. Kendall had descended from the pulpit and stood at the chancel steps. 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

Adelaide glanced at her brother, a mischievous interrogation in her eyes; Laura sat looking down at her prayer-book; Mrs. Kendall gazed straight before her with lips compressed. Roger thought that their expressions, though so different in character, all registered the same feeling of discomfort.

After the service he said to his mother as she moved out into the aisle, 'Do you mind if I break away? I want to get out of sight as quickly as possible.'

'Oh,' said Mrs. Kendall, with a faint smile. 'I supposed that you'd want to walk home with your father. He'd like to have you, I know.'

The challenge was one that Roger felt bound to accept. 'All right,' he said. 'I'll do it if you think it would please him. Will you, too?'

'Not to-day. Come, girls.'

But Adelaide was at that moment bestowing a cordial greeting upon some one in the next aisle. Roger looked across and saw Brent, the reporter, who was gazing at them with an

eagerness that suggested a desire on his part to leap over the intervening pews.

'You and Laura go in the car,' Adelaide said to her mother. 'I'll walk. I need the exercise.'

She lagged behind; Laura followed her mother's swift and resolute pace which Mrs. Kendall allowed no greeting, however friendly, to arrest; Roger, surrendering to the fate that he had desired to avoid, took his stand in the vestibule of the church and there received such words of welcome and congratulation as those who passed chose to bestow on him. It was not an altogether disagreeable experience; the sparkle in Sally Winant's gray eyes and the flush on her cheeks pleased him as she said in her soft voice, 'It's so nice to see you again, Roger!'

'But not half so nice as it is to see you again, Sally,' he responded; her blush deepened, her laugh was musical.

For the few moments while she stood and chatted with him, he forgot his discomfort and embarrassment in the mere pleasure of seeing her and hearing her voice.

'You're living in town now?' he asked.

'Yes, but I'm going to Bolton on Tuesday for the summer.' She hesitated; a shadow seemed to pass over her face, but then she said, 'Perhaps you'll come out some time, Roger?'

'You have only to ask me,' he answered.

As she moved away, he followed her graceful figure with his eyes; while she was near he wished to look only at her. He was glad that she was unaccompanied by her husband; he could imagine with what enjoyment Spencer Winant would have observed him and listened to the sermon, and with what delight he would have commented on it afterwards to Sally.

John Hadfield, one of the older members of the bar, shouldered in and demanded Roger's attention with a characteristic witticism: 'Glad you're home, Kendall. But I guess you'd rather be a target for the Boche than be shot at from the pulpit.'

'Yes, I'll have to punish the old man for that,' Roger said lightly.

He saw Brent go by with Adelaide and accompany her as she turned homeward; they were so much interested in talking to each other that neither of them was aware of being observed. He was gazing after them when Isabel Ashton appeared before him. 'Do tell your father for me that his sermon helped me, oh, so much!' she said; her eyes were shining with emotional exaltation. 'I'm so grateful to you, Major Kendall, for having inspired it.' She left him as his Aunt Harriet approached; he saw her enter a limousine in the rear window of which was a tiny gold-starred service flag.

'Can I take you home, Roger?' said Mrs. Markham.

'Thank you, Aunt Harriet; I'm lying in wait for Father. I have a bone to pick with him.'

Mrs. Markham's good-natured countenance fell; she looked at Roger entreatingly.

'Don't be hard on him, Roger. It really was a good sermon; everybody thought so — and it came so from the heart!'

'It would have been fine last Sunday, or the Sunday before. But coming to-day it struck me as a little — well, pointed.'

'But just think, Roger dear, how all the great painters and sculptors have always made use of their wives and families! And the poets and novelists, too, so I've read. Why not the preachers — especially when there's such a splendid chance!'

'I admit that if the sermon helped people, my personal feelings ought to be put aside.'

'But, my dear, I can't understand your not being uplifted by such a sermon. I felt uplifted — and I'm only his sister! For you, his son — '

'I don't much care to be uplifted, Aunt Harriet; sooner or later there comes a crash. I'd rather be allowed to stay on the ground.'

'How can you! There's that poor Mrs. Ashton who lost her husband in France; when your father spoke so comfortingly I

couldn't help watching her; she was leaning forward drinking in every word. Now don't go and throw cold water on your father, Roger.'

'All right, Aunt Harriet. I won't.'

'That's a good boy.'

'Where is Uncle Robert this morning, Aunt Harriet?'

'It's such a fine day he felt he had to play golf,' she admitted. 'I'm sure, though, that when I tell him about the sermon he'll be sorry.'

Dr. Kendall, having shaken hands at the church door with the last of the departing parishioners, emerged.

'Ah, Roger,' he said with unfeigned pleasure, 'waiting for me, are you? Good enough.'

'I have a message I was asked to deliver to you,' said Roger as they walked homeward. 'Mrs. Ashton came up to me immensely stirred and said, "Tell your father his sermon has helped me ever so much."'

'Poor soul! I'm glad — very glad. Several others spoke to me in the same vein. It seemed to get home to them. — It was quite an inspiration, I think — my hitting upon that text for just this morning, Roger.'

'I was pretty sure you were congratulating yourself on your cleverness,' Roger said cheerfully.

IV

THE freshness of the May morning had ripened at noon to a pleasant warmth; soft vagrant notes and occasional contented chirpings in the trees had succeeded the early ecstatic chorus of the birds; the mounting sun had unveiled the lawns from shadow and touched to greater vividness the flowers blooming in hedgerows and gardens; windows were open in the houses; the agreeable suburban world was at its brightest, friendliest, and most hospitable. It was one of those days when Nature is in a wooing mood, and when two young people, meeting happily, pay no attention to fond Nature, or rather accept its pleasant ministrations and manifestations as merely a helpful, appropriate incitement to the unfolding of their thoughts, desires, and emotions.

Adelaide Kendall and Francis Brent walked together slowly down the avenue, past high wrought-iron fences, past hedges of lilac and barberry and privet, past neo-Italian villas and early Colonial mansions and large wooden houses that had been built not long enough ago and yet just too soon, with mansard roof and cupola, or much embayed and turreted; past smart brick houses of the Tudor style of architecture, beamed and stuccoed Elizabethan houses, Georgian façades and Queen Anne gables, a Norman Gothic castle in granite — for the suburb had long been one in which the best people dwelt and therefore it recorded the fluctuations in architectural taste and fashion that had affected the best people at various periods. Shining automobiles sped up and down the broad avenue; on the sidewalks under the oak trees people were strolling in pairs, men in morning coats and with walking-sticks, ladies in light-colored dresses and with bright parasols; it was the leisurely hour between church service and Sunday dinner on a fine May morning. But Adelaide and

Francis walked together as little attentive to the people as to the houses, the trees, the sky.

'Tell me,' Adelaide had said, emerging from the church and turning to the young man with a rallying smile, 'have you a daily assignment to cover the doings of the Kendall family?'

'I wasn't sent to write up the sermon,' he protested.

'Father will be sorry to hear that. But he'll be pleased that you paid him the compliment of wanting to hear him preach. I hope you'll decide to come to our church regularly.'

'Yes, I think I shall.'

'Are you going in my direction? Shall we walk along together?'

'Nothing I should like better.'

She herself enjoyed being seen in the company of a new young man, one so presentable, good looking; he carried himself well, his gray clothes had style, his taste in neckties was not crude. But what was most attractive about him, she felt, what most distinguished him from the other young men who intermittently or continually sought her favor was the eager enthusiasm that sparkled in his face as he talked to her. She had made a careful study of young men's eyes; she was familiar with the gaze of cool, admiring intentness, of earnest pleading, of soft adulation, of moody reproach, of slumberous passion, but she had never encountered before quite the expression that leaped in Francis Brent's blue eyes, an expression of joyous, ardent liking, inviting, responsive, twinkling, humorous, with now and then a gentler gleam, as of shyness and diffidence. He was so ingenuous and definite in the betrayal of his feelings, and they were somehow such creditable feelings, that Adelaide found herself warming to him quite recklessly, and therefore she ventured in her chaffing speech further than she would ordinarily have done.

'After the story you heard yesterday about Mr. Hoyt, I should think you'd have been more interested in going to his church than to ours.'

'I thought I should be more likely to see you if I went to your father's church.'

'But you saw me only yesterday — and you've never seen Mr. Hoyt!'

'I somehow didn't feel the same impatience about seeing him. — How did you like my article?'

'I thought it was good. — You know, when anybody walks home with me from church, I always expect him to stay for luncheon. I hope you have no other engagement.'

'Fortunately not. And I'm so glad nobody else is walking home with you.'

An automobile horn sounded behind them and then a large open car gliding by drew up at the curb. The driver, the only occupant of the car, a stout, broadfaced young man, omitting the formality of touching his cap, called out,

'Hello, Adelaide! Can I give you and your friend a lift?'

Somewhat to her companion's annoyance, Adelaide, who had been walking on the inside, stepped out to the curb to speak to this informal gentleman.

'No, it's such a heavenly day I don't want to get anywhere quickly. But why don't you stop in for a few minutes before luncheon, Leonard? Roger's home, you know, and he'll be keen to see you.'

'He arrived yesterday, did he?'

'Yes; didn't you read Mr. Brent's piece about him in the "Times" this morning?'

'Mr. Whose?'

'Mr. Brent, Mr. Warder; I'm sorry; I thought you probably knew each other. Mr. Brent wrote up an interview with Roger for the "Times," and Roger's going to show his gratitude by shaking a cocktail for Mr. Brent before luncheon. He'll shake one for you, too, Leonard — or if he won't I will.'

'I guess I'll have to drop round and see the old boy. How is he? Owlish as ever?'

'I should say he's just the same. The war doesn't seem to have spoiled him.'

'I don't suppose it's livened him up any. You've always had all the pep of the family, Adelaide. I'll be round before lunch; Roger needs an excuse for a cocktail. Bye-bye.'

He included Brent in the negligent wave of his hand as he drove away.

'Dear lamb, manners never were his strong point,' Adelaide remarked.

'I will forgive a man anything except the assumption that I'm not an excuse for a cocktail,' said Francis. 'I think that your friend is the last word in insolence.'

She laughed joyously. 'Why, he did imply something like that, didn't he! He can't help being rude, but he never means to be. You'll like him when you know him; everybody does.'

'I don't expect ever to know him well enough for that.'

'You're almost vindictive, aren't you! I've noticed that men usually are when their vanity has been wounded. But you'll find Leonard quite genial when you have your cocktail with him.'

'Of course. That's one of the reasons for having cocktails — so as to be genial with people that you'd otherwise bite. I don't mean,' he added hastily, 'that it's the only reason. In fact, there are as many good reasons as there are ways of writing tribal lays — and every single one of them is right.'

'I know now,' said Adelaide, 'that you will find Leonard a man after your own heart. More so really than Roger. Owlish, Leonard called him. He isn't that exactly, but I always told him that he was one who took his pleasures a little sadly. If you will notice you will see that there's a slightly melancholy note when he says, "Here's how."'

'Perfectly understandable in these days,' said Francis. 'It's like parting with a bit of your capital instead of just a bit of your income.'

'That isn't what troubles Roger. It's just that he's always

been a very grave young man. And of course as Leonard so elegantly put it, the war hasn't livened him up any. He belongs to the Strauss waltz era instead of the jazz age. Leonard on the other hand has come back from France more slangy and jazzy and — well, rummy than ever. But he was a good officer and his men adored him.'

Francis, glancing at her face, wondered if she shared to any degree in their adoration. He felt instinctively that Leonard Warder had looked at him with eyes that were as hostile as they were questioning.

He was not at all sure that there was any more friendly expression than that of surprise and interrogation in Mrs. Kendall's eyes when he appeared before her in her drawing-room.

'I've enticed Mr. Brent in to lunch with us,' Adelaide explained to her mother. 'I told him that if he would come in Roger would give him a cocktail. So he's here. And Leonard is coming in a few minutes. Not to luncheon. Just for a cocktail.'

Mrs. Kendall received Francis Brent graciously and chatted with him for a few moments about his article. Then she withdrew to give the order for an extra place and for the cocktails. She paused on her way to the door. 'You're sure, Adelaide, that Leonard won't stay for luncheon too?'

'Positive,' said Adelaide.

In the cream and gold drawing-room, seated in a yellow damask sandalwood chair with a tapestry on the wall behind her, Adelaide in her pink dress and pink hat, with her pink cheeks and her honey-colored hair, seemed to Francis Brent the prettiest and most picturesque, the liveliest and blithest creature that he had ever seen. The cool spaciousness of the long room, with its mirrors and French windows, was an appropriate setting for her, he thought — and thought it with something of a sigh.

Laura entered and greeted him with cordiality; then Dr.

Kendall, bluff and hearty. 'I read your article, Mr. Brent; very good, in the American newspaper style. What I have to criticize in it is what I have to criticize in all our newspaper writing — a lack of leisureliness, of philosophy, such as you find in the columns of the London "Times" or any other of the first-class English newspapers. Crispness, snappiness, what is vulgarly known as pep seem to be the American newspaper man's objective — all fatal to the creation of atmosphere and background and philosophic thought.'

'I don't doubt that the criticism is just,' said Francis.

'I'm just as well pleased to be treated with as little atmosphere and background and philosophic thought as possible,' remarked Roger.

The appearance of Leonard Warder broke up the conversation on the subject of the newspaper article. 'Greetings, ladies!' he said breezily as he entered the room; his brown knickerbockers and Norfolk jacket, his soft collar and bright pink necktie, and a certain confident swagger in his bearing suggested that breezy informality was his style. 'Ah, there, Roger!' He crossed to him and grasped his hand. 'Do you fancy yourself so much in the military rig that you won't get out of it when you have the chance?'

'No; it's just in order that the family may fix the picture in their minds,' said Roger. 'They begged for one more day.'

'You're to make some cocktails, Roger,' Adelaide announced. 'I think you'll find everything ready for you in the library.'

'I'll see that he does a good job of it,' said Leonard; he took Roger's arm and walked with him into the adjoining room where a table bore all the necessary ingredients and appurtenances. He watched for a few moments with anxious attention; then his face cleared approvingly and he said, 'Generous with the gin; right-o! Tell me, Roger, who is that bird that Adelaide has laid hold of?'

'Brent? He's a reporter on the "Times," a Yale man — was

in aviation. Interviewed me yesterday afternoon — seems now to be after an interview with Adelaide.'

'Yes, evidently. She wouldn't give me a bid to luncheon; this is to be his day. She fascinates men too easily; you ought to speak to her about it.'

'I've a worse job than that on my hands. Isabel Ashton has asked me to come and see her this afternoon. Do you know whether she has any suspicion of the truth?'

'She hasn't the slightest. After I got home I had a note from her asking if I could give her any details. I simply wrote to her that I couldn't; I was at a point distant from the place where Jim had been fighting; I just added that I had been so sorry to learn he had been killed. Not strictly truthful, I suppose, but good God, Roger, here's a case where everybody who knows the truth has got to lie.'

'That seems to have been the idea from the moment of his death. I doubt if it was a really sound idea — even though it originated with so good a man as Ben Hampden.'

'Poor Ben! It was just a week later that he got his at Saint-Quentin, wasn't it?'

'Yes. And somehow when almost his last act was to try to protect the reputation of his friend and brother-officer and spare Jim's wife and mother the cruelest pain, it makes carrying on the lie a sort of sacred duty.'

'That's the only way to look at it. And you've just got to hope that the true story doesn't get to Isabel's ears some time.'

'If it did, it would at least make her think kindly of Ben. You know he was in love with her before Jim ever was. — I've more or less forgotten how many of my family drink cocktails in the middle of the day, but six glasses ought to be enough. You might carry the tray, Leonard, and I'll follow along with the shaker.'

Five glasses proved to be all that were needed; Laura and her mother declined, Adelaide and her father accepted, Dr. Kendall with a note of explanation in his voice.

'I find that after my Sunday morning efforts, a little stimulant has a tranquilizing effect.'

'Here's how,' said Roger solemnly, lifting his glass.

Adelaide laughed and glanced at Francis Brent, who, however, responded with equal solemnity. 'Here's how.'

Leonard drained his glass, set it down, and said, as he crossed towards the door, 'So nice of you, Adelaide, to have invited me to your party; sorry I can't stay.'

'Here, wait a minute.' Roger pursued him across the room, refilling his glass from the shaker as he advanced.

'Oh, very well; thanks.' Leonard disposed of the offering briefly, returned the glass to Roger, said, 'Bye-bye,' and with a wave of his hand departed.

It was not wholly a sense of responsibility as host that caused Dr. Kendall during luncheon to address himself to Francis Brent with an air of exceptional interest. Many a young man at the Kendalls' table had received only the most scant personal attention from the rector, who towards his daughters and their friends usually adopted a preoccupied and slightly bored attitude. All the more striking therefore was his cordiality to the young newspaper man.

'I suppose,' he said genially, 'that we all of us believe there's some one job that we could do rather better than it's being done, if we could only have a free hand at it. I've felt, for instance, that I could improve on the Monday morning "Times" if I were given a chance.'

'Monday morning!' exclaimed Mrs. Kendall. 'Why do you limit yourself, Damon? You know that you think you could improve on it every day in the week.'

'My dear, you mustn't betray me to Mr. Brent. He'll get the idea that I think altogether too well of myself and too poorly of the "Times." No, Mr. Brent, I should be satisfied if you'd let me build up your Monday morning issue for you; that's always the weakest of the week. — Not such a bad pun, that, eh, Roger?'

'Goodness, Father, those Sunday cocktails are likely to be your undoing,' remarked Adelaide.

'What I mean is that the Monday morning newspaper is apt to be filled with trivial happenings—automobile accidents and that kind of thing. Sunday is not a day of action, and it's action apparently that a newspaper thinks it must chronicle. But it would be so much better if on Monday morning the newspapers gave a larger share of their space to an account of what I like to think are the really significant occurrences of Sunday. Suppose that you printed each Monday extracts from sermons preached the preceding day in churches of the principal denominations — I am sure your thoughtful readers would appreciate it. Perhaps sometimes you would want to give a sermon in full. You would find the ministers of the churches glad to coöperate with you; the Second Presbyterian Church, the Central Avenue Methodist, the South Side Baptist, my own church, for instance — we could all supply you with plenty of material.'

'Of course we do have a certain amount of church news in our Monday issue,' said Francis.

'Oh, yes, but it's scrappy and unsatisfactory. A brief mention of a number of churches, and nothing significant about any of them. Take four or five of the most important and present the messages expressed in their pulpits each Sunday. You'll start people reading that page then with real interest. At present they just glance at it and turn it over.'

'I don't see, Damon, how you could contribute,' said Mrs. Kendall. 'You never have your sermons written out.'

'It would be a simple matter to arrange to have a stenographer take them down as I deliver them. I could guarantee that the "Times" would receive an accurate typewritten copy every Sunday evening.'

'Perhaps a newspaper would rather arrange for sermons by clergymen who preach from manuscript,' Mrs. Kendall suggested blandly. 'They would be likely to be in better form

for printing than extemporaneous sermons. Mr. Hoyt, I think, always preached from manuscript; the "Times" might like to get some of his sermons.'

For all the blandness of his mother's voice, Roger felt that there was a blighting purpose in her words. A glance at his father's red and plethoric face, with the big vein in the forehead standing out prominently, told him that Dr. Kendall too was fully aware of that hostile intention.

'Mr. Brent may rely upon it that my sermons will always be in proper form for the printer,' he said stiffly. 'Though I preach without notes I think that doesn't imply unfitness for publication.'

'No, Father dear, you never say anything in the pulpit that isn't fit for publication,' said Adelaide lightly. 'Now that Mr. Brent knows that, I'm sure he'll feel there's no reason why he shouldn't come to our church occasionally and even take a class in the Church School if he's needed.'

'Adelaide, I'm trying to make a serious suggestion to Mr. Brent; you don't help matters by being flippant.'

'I shall be very glad to present your suggestion to the chief, Dr. Kendall,' said Francis. 'I'm sorry but I haven't any more to do with making up the paper or deciding what is to go into it than the office cat has. But I should think that when there are any striking and vigorous sermons on timely subjects the "Times" would welcome them.'

'Just by way of illustration, such a sermon as the one I preached this morning. The soldier's return is a theme just now that appeals to nearly every family. Sermons that have a broad, general appeal and some constructive thought — I'm quite sure you could strengthen your Monday morning issue by printing them.'

'I hope, Father, you'll preach your next sermon about me,' said Adelaide. 'Roger's not the only inspiring example in this family.'

'Adelaide dear, don't egg your father on to preach a series

of sermons about the members of the family,' said Mrs. Kendall.

'I don't know why I shouldn't,' her husband said belligerently. 'I made an excellent beginning to-day — judging by the things that were said to me after the service. Isabel Ashton expressed her gratitude; she told Roger that I had helped her.'

'Her husband was killed in the war,' Laura explained to Francis.

'Have you heard any details about his death?' Roger asked.

'Only that he was killed in the fighting round Saint-Quentin. That's all that Isabel knows.'

'That's all there is to tell,' said Roger. 'She's asked me to come and see her this afternoon. I'm rather dreading it.'

'Some people are not awfully sympathetic with her,' remarked Adelaide. 'They remember how badly Jim Ashton behaved the last three or four years and feel sure that Isabel would have separated from him if it hadn't been for the little boy. But from the moment he volunteered he became a perfect hero in her eyes; she apparently forgave him everything and talked about him to her friends as if there had never been such love as theirs. It made people feel a little irritated. It didn't seem as if it could be sincere. But when the news of his death came, she almost collapsed, and anybody who's seen her in the months since then couldn't doubt that she was completely broken up. Everybody says there's never been such a transformation in any one.'

'It was tragic, too, the news that followed so soon after Jim's death,' said Laura. 'I think there wasn't a friend of Isabel's that didn't hope the moment they heard that Jim had been killed that some time now she'd marry Ben Hampden.'

'Hope it!' exclaimed Adelaide. 'Why, I could hardly restrain myself from saying it to her.' She explained to Francis, 'He had loved her for years and he'd never married; he was worth ten Jim Ashtons.'

'He wrote her the letter telling what few details of her husband's death she has ever heard,' said Laura. 'And within a week after it arrived came the news that he had been killed too.'

'Did you ever hear what details about Jim's death Ben had sent her?' asked Roger.

'Why, there were hardly any. He wrote that he didn't know that anybody had actually seen Jim when he was hit. It happened, he said, near Saint-Quentin.'

'Yes,' Roger said. 'And that's about all that I can tell her too. He was killed instantly — shot through the heart. I've talked with the other officers of the regiment and with various men in Jim's company, and not one of them has any more information to give than I have.'

'She said she had received letters from you and the Colonel and Mr. Hoyt and others, and they had made her feel so proud of Jim.'

Roger did not reply; he sat gazing absently for a moment out of the window; between him and the sunny picture of flowering shrubs and plum trees in bloom intervened a memory, dimming the brightness of the scene. Himself, Ben Hampden, and Hoyt in the chaplain's dug-out, the uncertain light from the one candle throwing great shadows on the walls and intensifying the somberness of each face, while Ben Hampden cried, 'We've got to keep the truth from her. We can't break her heart.'

Roger did not reënter the conversation, which became general. He halted it for a moment with a question: 'Is any one using the small car this afternoon?'

Apparently no one had any intention of using it.

'I'll have Barker take you anywhere you want to go,' offered Dr. Kendall.

'Thank you, Father; I'd rather drive myself. I may be gone all the afternoon, and some of the rest of you may find you'll want Barker and the big car.'

'It's not very pleasant, driving out on a Sunday afternoon,' Adelaide reminded him. 'So frightfully crowded.'

'I'm not going out for pleasure,' replied Roger. 'I want to have a talk with Mr. Hoyt before I go to see Isabel.'

He smoked one cigarette after luncheon, excused himself to Brent, and took his departure. Half a minute after he had gone Adelaide presented herself at the door of the library, where Dr. Kendall over his cigar was again plying Brent with suggestions for the desecularizing of the Monday morning 'Times.'

'I don't want to hurry your cigar, Mr. Brent,' she said, 'but after you get through we might go for a walk, if you feel up to it. Off into the woods, far from the madding crowds of automobiles.'

'I feel up to it at once,' Brent answered, rising. 'But on the other hand' — he glanced at Dr. Kendall — 'it would be an act of disrespect to an excellent cigar and of ingratitude to your father who presented it to me to cast it away half smoked.'

Dr. Kendall waved his hand at Adelaide impatiently. 'Don't interrupt us, Adelaide; let Mr. Brent enjoy his cigar at leisure.'

'I shall be ready to start in ten minutes,' said Adelaide. 'I'll call for you then, Mr. Brent.'

V

SAINT STEPHEN'S CHURCH was a plain brick edifice on the principal street of one of the shabby-genteel quarters of the city. On either side of it was an apartment house of cheap construction; on the opposite side of the street from it was a row of substantial old brick houses which had proved as the years passed too aristocratic for the neighborhood and which had each one submitted to having its first floor made over into a shop or a cafeteria.

Roger turned into a cross-street and stopped his car in front of a small brick house with a flat front, a sloping roof, and a cavelike entrance. A number of other houses in the row were of the same pattern. Going up the steps into the cave Roger thought how desperately cheerless must have been the chaplain's return to this place. He rang the bell; presently the door was opened by an elderly woman who ushered him into the small, poorly lighted front room; an upright piano, the cover drawn down over the keyboard, stood against the wall; on it was a bowl of white and purple lilacs, and on the table by the fireplace and on the mantelpiece were other bowls and vases holding lilacs and tulips and sprays of flowering shrubs. They gave an atmosphere of graciousness to a room that without them had shown only a drab austerity — gray walls bare except for engravings of cathedrals and a print of the Sistine Madonna; a faded red carpet; stiff-backed chairs with worn seats; on the desk in the corner a nickel-plated student lamp with white shades, and a large framed photograph showing a young woman's face in profile — a face of unusual delicacy and sweetness.

Hoyt appeared in the doorway; his eyes lighted up when he saw his visitor.

'My dear fellow,' he exclaimed, 'this is good of you, to call on me so soon!'

'To tell you the truth, Hoyt,' replied Roger, 'I've come because I need your help.'

'That's even more gratifying. Sit down and tell me about it.'

'I've agreed to go and see Mrs. Jim Ashton this afternoon; no doubt she'll ask me for all the details about Ashton's death. Probably she will want you some time to tell her all that you know. I had a few minutes' talk with Leonard Warder before coming here. He feels, as I do, that evasion and even absolute fabrication is the only course open to us. But if we're to make up a story, it's important that we should all have the same story. Have you anything to suggest?'

'No fabrication, Roger. I want to spare her, of course.'

'Do you think that a lie is never justified?'

'I'm not prepared to say that. But I think that usually when a lie seems the only way out of a difficulty, sufficient consideration hasn't been given to other methods.'

'I can't conceive of a situation where a lie would be more thoroughly justified than in this.' Roger spoke warmly. 'Here is a woman worshiping the memory of her dead husband — with a little boy that she's bringing up to worship his memory too. For her he's a hero and a saint. No harm can possibly be done, no injustice can be done, if we help her to fill out the picture.'

'It's a generous impulse, but sometimes it's unwise and wrong to be generous. Suppose you confirmed in detail the idea that she has, and then by some accident she learned the truth. Do you think that you would have done no harm in that event?'

'What harm greater than if I let her know the truth?'

'Wouldn't her humiliation be greater? Wouldn't she be likely to despise herself — feeling that people looked on her as a poor weak creature that had to be cajoled and comforted

with lies? Or else wouldn't such a discovery be more likely to make her utterly cynical and rebellious — more so even than she would be if she learned the truth now?'

'Suppose it were you, not I, who were to see her this afternoon, and she asked you point-blank if you could tell her how her husband died. Would you tell her that he was killed in a quarrel over another man's mistress?'

'I admit I would shrink from that. But there's no obligation that I can see to be so blunt. I think that before answering her question I should ask her what she had already heard about the circumstances of his death. Then if she said, "Only that he had been killed in action," I think I should say that unfortunately that report was incorrect, that he had not been killed in action.'

'Of course she would ask you to be explicit.'

'Then I should decline to give her any details. I should tell her that some men over there became reckless and lost their bearings, and that her husband was one of those. I should tell her that he had been a brave officer, that his military record had been without reproach, and that I hoped she could derive some comfort from that fact.'

'You would shatter an illusion that is very dear to her heart.'

'It would be an indulgence of one's own softness and comfort to do otherwise.'

'If she were left to cherish her illusion, she might have a serene kind of happiness that she could never attain if it were destroyed.'

'Happiness founded on unrealities can't last.'

'If you and I should agree never to let her suspect the truth, what could ever threaten her happy illusion?'

'There are probably a good many persons living besides ourselves and the other officers of the regiment who know how Captain Ashton was killed. The truth might reach her in various ways. But even if we were morally certain that she was protected against it — if she appealed to me for infor-

mation I should have to make some such answer as I have suggested.'

In spite of his affection and respect for the chaplain Roger could not conceal his irritation.

'Then you make it impossible for me to protect her against the truth,' he said. 'The chances are, of course, that she will some time meet you and question you about Jim — even if she doesn't seek you out to question you about him. There is no use in my carrying on the deception if you are going to betray me at the first opportunity.'

The clergyman rose and stood in silence by the mantelpiece while he filled his pipe.

'Roger,' he said at last, 'you may think me very illiberal and rigid, but I don't believe it ever pays to dodge or twist the truth. Now I'm going to give you another reason for the position I take in this matter; no doubt it will appear to you purely fantastic; to me it is real. For most of us, I think, the conception of heaven, of a future life, cannot go beyond the thought of the reunion with those whom we have loved and lost. The survival of personality, isolated from all touch with those for whom in this life the person had cared — one couldn't live happily even in heaven on such terms, no matter how heavenly a spot heaven might be. Now the Jim Ashton that Mrs. Ashton mourns never existed. The real Jim Ashton was unkind, disloyal, with little interest in his wife or his son. She will not find him or his kindred spirits in the plane of life to which her own devoted and unselfish life on this earth will give her entrance. Unless her eyes are awakened to his shortcomings and she continues to love him and treasure his memory; then I do believe that by her constancy of love and the intercession of her prayers his spirit may become transfigured — may even be permitted to await and join hers at the threshold. Very likely mysticism does not appeal to you. I don't expect you to be influenced by an argument drawn from it. I want you, though, to see how for me it enforces

always the importance of telling the truth — nothing but the truth.'

Roger was silent for a moment. 'It's a long time since I've been able to say truthfully, "Lord, I believe,"' he admitted. 'I've often thought that of all the men I've known you were the only one who might have the power to help my unbelief. Anyway it must be a splendid strengthening thing to have such faith.'

'I know the reservation in the back of your mind, Roger.' Hoyt's thin face crinkled in a smile and the tired look in his kind blue eyes was relieved by a gleam of humor. 'Splendid but so unintelligent! It's a natural attitude for a sensible man to take in these days — to accept whatever has been proved, to keep an open mind in regard to matters that may sometime be susceptible of proof, but to decline as a guiding principle any conception that so far as human knowledge at present goes seems humanly impossible of proof. And yet I think a case can be made out for the rationality of the mystic — at least my kind of mystic.'

'I'm interested,' said Roger. 'If you remove that reservation in the back of my mind you will do more for me than any one has yet done.'

'We clergymen have been too much on the defensive,' Hoyt proceeded. 'And like all people who have been driven to adopt the defensive, we've subdued ourselves to the dominant ideas and personalities of the time — even of our neighborhood. Social service is one of the dominant ideas to which we have surrendered ungrudgingly. It's a worthy Christian idea, but we have been too content to interpret it in terms of material assistance and social entertainment. The clergyman is so afraid of getting out of touch with people that he tries almost too hard to meet them more than half way. He's too receptive of their ideas to have any of his own. He tries to introduce modern progressive business methods into church management. He often tries too hard to be a man

among men. We saw it on the other side — chaplains who were pathetically anxious to have it forgotten six days of the week that they were chaplains, who wanted above all to appear good fellows, who talked enthusiastically to artillerymen of the good show that they put on, to infantrymen of their big push, to aviators of the Hun planes that they had accounted for. I fell into the habit myself: I have no right to talk in a superior way about them, except that I did finally come to my senses and see that there was something inappropriate and humiliating in a chaplain's adopting such a tone. The same kind of thing goes on at home in time of peace: the clergyman is constantly addressing himself to the layman not in the terms that most satisfy his own best convictions, but in those that he thinks will assure the layman of his breadth and tolerance. We clergymen have all of us concerned ourselves too much in our thoughts, words, and acts with this mortal life; we ought to be enforcing the vision of the future life and convincing men of the immortality of the soul.'

'Here am I,' said Roger, 'who should like nothing better than to be convinced. But how can you reconcile the idea of personal immortality with the actual fact of a definite moment of personal origin? If the soul is immortal, its life ought to extend into infinity in both directions.'

'It does,' asserted the clergyman. 'You speak of a definite moment of personal origin. But you cannot specify in your own case when that moment was. You were a living, breathing, conscious personality even before that first moment to which your memory reaches back. That unremembered personality was itself the fruit of loves, affections, impulses, desires, struggles and strivings, mental and moral traits and tendencies reaching back, generation by generation, through the ages, to the very origin of man on this earth, and thus to the chaos of infinity. Modern biology absolutely refutes the old Greek argument against immortality — which, if you will

allow me to say so, is virtually the same as yours — that it's like trying to conceive of a string with only one end. Organic inheritance, as modern biology shows, is extraordinarily rigid, predetermined, transmitted through the egg when it gives rise to a new individual. The fact that the consciousness that is now you came into being at your birth does not therefore mean that you had no previous existence or history. It means simply that at that moment you arrived at the stage in the history of your immortal soul when you received consciousness. That consciousness, it is my profound belief, you will not lose in death; it will then pass over to another plane in which your higher aspirations will be fulfilled, your more generous impulses given freer play, your capacity for love and friendship intensified — and all these good things done for you according to the degree of spiritual development that you showed in your earthly phase of existence.'

'Yes,' said Roger, 'that is all as we should like to have it, unquestionably. But what makes you feel so sure that it is so?'

'The very fact that to find it so is a universal longing. It isn't reasonable to suppose that an utterly absurd, baseless hope and yearning has been implanted in every human breast. The existence of the hope is a guarantee of the fulfillment. And look at it in another way. Does the human mind conceive of anything more beautiful? Before our physical eyes the beauty and harmony of our universe are constantly unfolding; so before our spiritual eyes beauty and harmony will unfold. The age that has seen the development of radio has no reason to be skeptical. The abysmal distances, the frightening figures of astronomy, do not reduce the importance of a single human soul; as between the tiniest islet on which man lives and struggles and aspires and the vast untenanted star, where does God's love rest? Now is the time for the churches to be setting men's hearts aflame with faith; it is no time for them to be dabbling in sociology and politics, welfare work and industrial problems, or to be bickering about unessentials of

doctrine. They ought to be establishing the principle that on the nature of the earthly life of each human being the nature of the spiritual life into which death will usher him will depend; most of all they ought to be carrying to people's minds the conviction of the existence of that spiritual life.'

Roger's thoughts reverted for a moment to his father who in his sermon that morning had expressed that conviction and so doing had brought a renewal of faith and strength to at least one member of the congregation — the very one whose faith Hoyt himself with his inexorable truth-telling was ready to shatter. He made a final plea.

'Suppose that in destroying Mrs. Ashton's illusion about her husband you or I destroy her love for him. Then by your doctrine there would be no chance of his redemption through her constant thought and prayers.'

'Probably not. He would have to achieve it slowly, painfully, himself.'

'In such a case shouldn't the desire to be merciful modify your stern ethics?'

'I have no desire to be merciful to Ashton. I have a desire to see deserving people get such happiness and satisfaction as they can out of the lives that selfish or malicious persons have done their utmost to spoil. I hope that the disclosure of the truth will alter Mrs. Ashton's feelings towards her husband — create a complete revulsion. I think I'm not vindictive — not rejoicing at the thought of Ashton's punishment. No, it's because her happiness has been only a sham, and until it is banished by the facing of stark reality there is no chance for her to have a happiness that is real. If in spite of all she remains loyal to his memory she is likely to cut herself off from the possibility of union with a kindred spirit. She deserves something better than to cherish as best she can the ghost of a love through her earthly life, and then to be welcomed on the other shore by a chastened yet none the less still uncongenial spirit.'

'Aren't you being inconsistent?' said Roger. 'I understood you to say that love if it was strong enough could reconstruct those who had been unworthy of it and could make them worthy. It does it sometimes in life — not in the case of Jim Ashton, I admit — and I thought you felt it could be even more effective after those who had proved unworthy ceased to be exposed to the temptations of this mortal life. If love has such power of reconstruction, how can you say that the ultimate reunion would be with a still uncongenial spirit?'

'Because I firmly believe that there are degrees of happiness and satisfaction in the spiritual life just as there are in this life.'

'Then you think conditions aren't much better there than here?'

'Oh, I didn't say that. And it's reasonable to suppose that there's constant progress. I might sum up my argument on this question by saying that life in all its phases is a precious thing, and that there is a point beyond which one should not go in making sacrifices for those who have proved unworthy.'

'And in this special case the whole future life, hereafter as well as here, of Isabel Ashton depends, you think, on whether after learning the truth about Jim she still loves him or loses her love for him.'

'To some degree, yes. She should have the opportunity to decide with the facts before her — or at least with some intimation of the facts. We shouldn't carry on a fraud against her to deprive her of them.'

'Against her — if it were really against her.' Roger seemed to be meditating on that thought. 'I don't quite see it as you do, Hoyt. I'm afraid I must hold a different view from yours about what is the considerate thing to do.'

'I suppose the difference in our points of view is characteristic of our professions,' said Hoyt. 'You're a lawyer, and you see Mrs. Ashton in the light of a client and your duty to her seems embraced in the effort to make things as comforta-

ble as possible for her — in shielding and protecting her from unpleasant experiences. Where the clergyman is called in, his only concern is the good of the human soul, and he flinches from his duty if he does not, so far as possible, bring the human soul face to face with the truth.'

'Yes, it takes more courage to be a minister than to be a lawyer,' Roger said. 'We do seek the comfortable solutions, I admit. And yet, you know, we don't enjoy shading the truth — any more, I imagine, than the minister does. I'm free to say that if it weren't for you and your threat of ultimate disclosure, I'd go to Mrs. Ashton this afternoon and lie with a straight face and a consciousness that I was doing a most disagreeable duty as well as I know how. Now you've complicated my problem for me most horribly. I don't know what I shall say to her.'

'I'm sorry, Roger, that I couldn't give you what you wanted to hear.'

'You've given me something to think about. Did you preach to your people this morning?'

'Yes.'

'I'm sure they were mighty glad to have you back. These flowers that are everywhere —'

'Yes. I wish I could show them how much their thought of me to-day has meant.'

'Don't worry about that, old man.' Roger put his hand on Hoyt's shoulder. 'I guess that when they saw you again, they realized more than ever how much you meant to them.'

'I hope I can mean more to them than before. The conviction that I've been speaking about to you — it's stronger in me since yesterday than it ever was. I told you what I should do first of all when I came home. Just beside her grave a pink hawthorn was in bloom. It was a quiet spot, a little glade in the cemetery, with shrubs flowering all around and maple trees and oaks green against the farther slope. There was a light breeze ruffling the leaves and making the

shadows dance. I closed my eyes and stood visualizing the scene — the place where she and I were to rest forever; and still with my eyes closed I saw her, coming through a garden toward me — a garden that I did not recognize; and then — you may say it was the wind as it passed, but it was something else to me; for just one moment something rested lightly on my head, something brushed my cheek. Often when I was working at my desk she would come to me — and I could never mistake that little caress. I did not open my eyes; the garden was empty now; gradually it faded away. Then when I looked once more the shadows of the leaves were still dancing on the grass. But I had received a benediction and a consecration in those few moments, holier to me than any that I had received before. To you, Roger, it is doubtless sheer imagining, a vision summoned out of the mere desire for it; to me it is the great reality of my life. And so perhaps you can see why I can't yield a conviction in any question that touches the spiritual life.'

Roger grasped and pressed his hand. 'I see, of course. And I know that after this experience, Hoyt, you'll be better able than ever to bring religion into other men's lives.'

Hoyt accompanied Roger out of the house and stood by while he got into the car. Then with a wave of the hand he turned; Roger as he drove off had a glimpse of him passing into the cavelike entrance of the dreary little house. Yet Hoyt's return to it had not been, Roger reflected, so desolate after all; however one might explain the vision that had immediately preceded his home-coming, it had unquestionably altered Hoyt's mood and outlook. Could one so intelligent as Hoyt, so well rounded a character, have hallucinations, Roger asked himself. Even though the answer might be yes, Roger felt stirred and stimulated by the talk of one who was so firmly convinced that he had been in the presence of a mysterious reality. And he felt also dissatisfied with his own horizon. Hoyt had been quite right in characterizing his aims and

accomplishments as typically lawyer-like — embraced in an effort, painstaking, conscientious, to arrange comfortable adjustments. Yes, he was merely an adjuster of the material affairs, once in a while of the human relations, of the people who sought his services. For the moment he felt impatient with his lot; how much more worth while to be like Hoyt, inspired with the consciousness and certainty of a higher reality, eagerly preaching a gospel of newly vitalized faith. It was religious faith, not material adjustments and helpful social service, that the world needed; happy the man, however sore smitten in his private life, who had that faith and could communicate it.

VI

ROGER drove home instead of to Isabel Ashton's house; it was still early in the afternoon, and he was by no means impatient for the meeting that had been appointed.

Dr. Kendall, hearing Roger's footsteps in the hall, emerged from his study.

'Yes, I'm deserted,' he replied in a complaining voice to Roger's question. 'Adelaide wouldn't let the young newspaper man finish his cigar — dragged him away from me before I had a satisfactory talk with him.'

'Where are Mother and Laura?'

'They've gone to the Arts Club — one of the Sunday afternoon concerts there.'

'Don't you want to go too? I'll drive you over if you care to join them.'

'No; I must spend an hour or so in my study, knocking out a few thoughts for my sermon this evening.' Dr. Kendall sighed as he turned and reëntered the room from which he had appeared. He seated himself at his desk, and Roger, lighting a cigarette, sat down opposite him. 'Two sermons a week are really too much to expect of any man. I find it's better to make my Sunday evening talks discussions of questions of the day.'

'Mr. Hoyt has just been telling me that he thinks people need and want sermons expressing the preacher's religious conviction rather than comments on current events,' remarked Roger.

'If he should ever come to Saint Paul's as my successor, he would have to revise his ideas.' Dr. Kendall took his eyeglasses which were suspended from his neck by a black ribbon and holding them between thumb and forefinger gesticulated with them delicately. 'Magazines and newspapers are as

necessary to the clergyman nowadays as the Bible. I give my congregation a doctrinal sermon once in a while; it always bores them. I hope that this notion of Hoyt's is just a temporary one; otherwise it will interfere with his advancement. The only salvation for the Church in these materialistic days is for its ministers to keep abreast of the times and influence people to take a right attitude towards vital questions. A clergyman doesn't need to be much of a theologian now, but he ought to be a student of economics and industrial relations and local and national politics and international affairs.'

'Most of them, if they try to give advice on all such matters, will spread themselves out pretty thin,' suggested Roger, 'besides inviting controversy with their parishioners. And I should think they might make a mistake in regarding the pulpit as a rostrum or a lecture platform.'

'It all depends on how skillful they are — on how successful they are in interesting the people. It may be that Hoyt can interest the people of Saint Stephen's with sermons of the old-fashioned sort. He couldn't interest the people of Saint Paul's with them; that I know. I suppose there is no use in dropping him a hint now — it would be premature — but the time may come, Roger, when you might quite casually express to him the hope that in the event of his being called to Saint Paul's he will realize the necessity of giving his congregation messages that are somewhat more up to date.'

'All right,' said Roger. 'I'll watch for an opening.' He rose and tossed his cigarette into the fireplace. 'I must be on my way. I won't keep you any longer from hammering out those thoughts. What are they to be on this time? Prohibition?'

'No; the tyranny of labor unions.'

'An excellent subject — and Saint Paul's will be one hundred per cent with you. Don't you think you'd handle it just as well if you accompanied me for a little stroll?'

Dr. Kendall shook his head. 'I need absolute solitude always to work out my ideas.'

Roger set forth aimlessly to kill the time until five o'clock; presently he found himself mounting a hill crowned with a neat little park which was encircled by a number of neat brick houses, all of the Georgian type of architecture and bearing the stamp of a real estate development company. There was no temptation to linger; the park seemed a rendezvous for nursemaids and their charges; the benches were all occupied — most of them by couples who seemed to invite rather than to resent attention to their love-making. Somewhat scornful of such lack of dignity, Roger continued on and finally passed beyond the settled portion of the city. He struck off into the wooded uplands, and there sauntering along the paths among the oaks and maple trees, he thought again of the words in which Hoyt had characterized his point of view; it was odd that anything said so innocently, with no intention of wounding, should leave such a sting. But it had confronted Roger abruptly with a vision of his life — what it had been before the war and what it was now to be; a condensed yet complete picture. To help to maintain the comfort of those who were already comfortable — truly a tame career! Taking care of other people's money for them, making out their income tax returns, methodically studying earnings and balance sheets, investing and reinvesting their surplus — what was it except to be a mere retainer and servant of the wealthy and luxurious? To be sure, there were a few clients who could not be so classified, a few for whom the effort to better their circumstances was of vital importance; there was a satisfaction in the thought that for these persons his services had opened opportunities that without the assistance of some such conscientious caretaker they would never have had. Yet how narrow and dull a field of service compared to that which now lay before Hoyt — before any man who was inspired like Hoyt with a definite vision and a religious conviction. Hoyt was right; vision, conviction, religion were what were needed, longed for; the need for leadership in material affairs, in

politics, in statecraft was all secondary to the need for the leadership in religion. The thought of his father's ambition to be a bishop and of his uncle's ambition to be a senator stirred in Roger a faint cynicism.

It was time for him to proceed to his appointment with Isabel Ashton. Half an hour of walking brought him to her door; he mounted the steps feeling curiously unprepared, as he had felt sometimes in his schoolboy days when he had entered a classroom without having studied the lesson. The house in which she lived was one of the grandiose dwellings of the city, a huge granite edifice, with deeply embrasured windows and an arched entrance, a red-tiled roof and a wide, red-tiled loggia at the farther end of which was a conservatory that from a little distance seemed to have the sheen and luster of mother-of-pearl. Exotic plants and trees in green tubs adorned the loggia — oleanders, bay trees, orange trees, Japanese plum trees; a gray parrot swung in a cage and fixed a cold eye upon the visitor. Waiting for admittance, Roger turned and looked out over the broad lawns with their handsome, symmetrical beeches, to the bank of shrubbery that, rising to the retaining wall, shut off the view of traffic in the street beyond. A massive house, secluded, inhabited by a young widow and a small child and numerous servants, an atmosphere of heavy, dreary luxury, in which life moved sluggishly — Isabel dimly conscious perhaps of its unreality, but indifferent in her despondency — so did impression and imagination present the scene to Roger while he stood waiting.

The maid ushered him into a drawing-room, spacious but dark — so dark that the numerous paintings in their heavy gold frames that hung upon the walls appeared dull in color and indistinct in detail. A tall iridescent glass vase filled with long-stemmed pink tulips stood on the lacquered table and was reflected in a mirror beyond; no other attempt had been made to lighten or brighten the somber dignity of the room. On the mantelpiece was a large framed photograph of an

officer in uniform. Roger studied it with curiosity and interest, wondering how the photographer had contrived to present so good a likeness of Jim Ashton and at the same time to eliminate his characteristic expression of sensuality and coarseness. Hearing footsteps descending the stairs, he turned away from the picture.

He was somewhat surprised by the manner of Isabel's entrance; he had expected to find her languid, lusterless, pathetic. But she entered the room with a brisk firm step and cried out in a lively and friendly voice as she advanced, 'Wasn't it very forward of me to beg you to come this first day you're at home! How nice of you to do it! You've been walking, haven't you? I'm glad, for that means you'll let me give you some tea.'

He was amused by her instant, uncritical observation of his dusty shoes. He liked people who were quickly observant; for the first time he regarded her with an interest that was somewhat other than pitying. She moved gracefully; her slightness of figure denoted no lack of strength, nor had it angularity; she sat at the tea-table with no slack drooping forward of shoulders; her arms, partly revealed as the loose sleeves fell away from them while she poured the tea, were rounded and well proportioned; her head well poised, her hazel eyes well spaced beneath broad brows over which her brown hair curled in little ringlets. The impression that he had earlier received of her as one over-sensitive, over-emotional, was not sustained; sensitive, emotional she was undoubtedly, as a glance at the curve of her lips or at the soft light in her eyes would show, but Roger after the first few moments would not have disparaged her by imputing to her an excess of any quality.

She seemed in no haste to explain why she had asked him to come. She questioned him about the voyage home, talked with him about Leonard Warder and other friends, told him an anecdote about her boy. — 'You'll see him in a few

minutes, when he has finished his supper,' she said. 'He was so young — only three — when his father went away that of course he will never remember him. And unfortunately I have no pictures to help in keeping the memory vivid in his mind. Jim would never have his photograph taken — I couldn't persuade him; not until just before he was going across. Then he relented, and that photograph on the mantelpiece is all that I have to show to little Jim.'

'It's a very good picture of him.'

'Yes, I like it. If only I had others! You saw a good deal of Jim, didn't you?'

'We were in the same battalion; we worked together.'

'He mentioned you in some of his letters — said how pleasant it was being with you. He admired you very much.'

Roger tried not to look too incredulous. He was quite sure that Jim Ashton had always regarded him as a tedious, unexciting person and had resented his superiority in rank.

'Jim was a very dashing officer — just the type of officer that men follow with enthusiasm in action,' Roger said.

'I was sure he would be that. For a time I hoped I should hear that he had won the Distinguished Service Cross — it would be such an inspiration for the boy. And I am sure that he would have done something to deserve it if he'd had the chance. But I suppose there's no use in hoping any longer — especially as there seems to be nobody who knows exactly how he died.'

Roger felt his heart quicken its beat. He could not speak the truth now, and yet he could not lie. She waited for him to speak; he remained embarrassingly silent.

'Leonard wrote that he had been killed by a revolver bullet,' she said at last. 'That would mean that it must have been in fighting at close quarters, wouldn't it?'

'It would seem so,' Roger resounded lamely. His scalp was prickling, his face had grown hot, and he was aware that the sweat was coming on his forehead.

'I suppose it might have been in a trench raid — but there would probably have been some report of the circumstances, wouldn't there?'

'Almost certainly, yes. No, it would hardly have been in a trench raid.' Roger felt trapped; he felt that the flush and the sweat on his face were betraying him; he felt that even his utterance was strange, unnatural, and must excite suspicion.

'Do you think he might have gone out reconnoitering in some dangerous place and been killed? Or would a captain go out all alone, and none of his men know what had happened?'

'It's pretty unlikely, but there were no doubt such cases.'

'If he did that, it was of course because he didn't want to send any one else on such a dangerous errand. And if that were so, he would be entitled to the Distinguished Service Cross, wouldn't he? Except that there was no witness to testify for him.'

'Yes; there has to be the testimony of witnesses before an award can be made.' Roger touched his forehead with his handkerchief.

'I'm afraid it's very warm in here.' She looked at him with concern, and glanced towards the windows; they were all open. He muttered awkwardly something about being warm after walking, and then the hot tea. — 'Do you mind if I smoke?'

'Please do.'

With a cigarette between his lips and lighted he felt he could assume greater self-control. Despite that aid he was to continue for a few moments longer to experience the sensations of the toad under the harrow.

'A strange thing is that nobody seems able to describe very definitely just where or how they found him after he was killed. And surely the position in which he was found would give some clue to the circumstances.'

'It might or it might not,' said Roger. 'I think that since

there's such vagueness on that point, it's best to assume that there was no clue.'

'It seems hard, doesn't it, that a soldier's wife and boy shouldn't know something of the crowning act of his life?'

'There are so many soldiers' families who have been deprived of that knowledge in this war,' said Roger gently. 'Isn't it enough for you, Mrs. Ashton — won't it be enough for your boy when he grows older — to know that Jim was a gallant soldier, who feared nothing?'

'If it is all that we can know, it must be enough,' she answered sadly. 'But I feel sure there was so much more, to give us pride, if we could only know!'

Roger could say nothing, even though he felt that silence must seem unsympathetic. But she was too much wrapt in her own thoughts to be aware of its implications.

'How strange it is,' she said musingly, 'that the one man he wrote of — well, a little disparagingly — should have been the one to win the Distinguished Service Cross — to do the kind of thing that Jim would have done if he'd had the chance!'

'Mr. Hoyt, the chaplain?'

'Yes. Poor man, I was so sorry afterwards to hear of his loss. And he had written me a kind letter about Jim — kind even if it didn't say much about him. But I suppose he didn't know him very well; Jim couldn't have been congenial with a clergyman. That was all that he had against Mr. Hoyt, I think — and of course if he had lived to know of his bravery, it would have altered his feeling completely.'

'It could hardly have failed to do that. But very likely Jim had changed his ideas about Mr. Hoyt anyway, after coming to know him a little. Mr. Hoyt was not like some other chaplains.'

'Perhaps he will come and let me talk with him some time,' said Isabel. 'If you ever see him, please say that I expressed that hope.'

Roger bowed his assent.

'I suppose that he would come anyway,' Isabel continued. 'The fact that he read the burial service — '

She stopped abruptly. A little boy in a white linen suit, a round-faced, pink-cheeked little boy, with brown hair and large, inquiring brown eyes appeared and stood uncertainly for a moment in the doorway. Then he came running to Isabel, who put her arm around him and caressed him while he stood by her side.

'Do you think he looks like his father?' she asked.

'More like you, I should say,' Roger answered, and felt that she ought not to be so visibly disappointed by his reply.

'Going to bed, Mother,' said the little boy.

'Yes, dear. Mother will be up in a few minutes to hear you say your prayers. Say good-night to Mr. Kendall.'

The child came over to Roger and held out his hand. Roger took it and patted it. 'Good-night, sir,' he said. The little boy smiled in response, then turned and trotted out of the room.

'You're very lucky to have him,' said Roger. 'He'll be a fine companion for you.'

'Yes, but it frightens me when I look ahead and think how unable I shall be to help him and guide him when he's growing up. While he's little, it's easy, of course. — I suppose you don't believe in spiritism?'

He was startled by the abrupt change of subject. 'I never was interested enough to investigate it,' he answered. 'I must admit I'm entirely skeptical.'

'Yes.' She sighed. 'So am I, and I wish I weren't. I had a sitting a short time ago; Marjorie Yates had told me of a medium who had given her messages from her mother that seemed characteristic. But I got nothing that convinced me. And yet, when so many intelligent people are convinced, I can't help feeling that there must be something real about spiritism.'

'Mr. Hoyt, I think, is a believer in it. At least he feels he has had something in the nature of a direct communication.'

Isabel's face lighted eagerly. 'Oh, I must have him come and talk to me!' she exclaimed.

'I don't believe he'd encourage any one to visit mediums,' Roger said. 'His own experience was personal.'

'But perhaps he could advise me what to do to have a similar experience.'

'I doubt it. The thing happened to him; that was all. I'm sure, though, that he would be glad to tell you about it, as he told me — a feeling that his wife came and touched him, while he stood by her grave.'

'But no word spoken?'

'No. Of course it's hard for me to attach much importance to the report of such an experience, but then I'm rather a materially minded person, I suppose. And I'm bound to say that the thing did have a profound effect on Mr. Hoyt.'

'Does he seem a person who might easily delude himself in such a matter?'

'I never thought so before. But when one is emotionally wrought up, perhaps it's easy to see or feel what one wants to see or feel.'

'Still I should like to hear him tell about it. Anything that might help me to believe such communication is possible — even though it may never be possible for me — it would somehow strengthen my faith — help me to be more reconciled. And then there would be always the hope that some time I might have a similar experience too. It would make life so much more cheerful, just to know that such things could be!'

'Indeed I can realize that,' said Roger. 'As for me, I'm only bewildered when a man like Mr. Hoyt reports such an experience with such absolute faith. I don't know what to make of it. But if you can accept his interpretation — yes, it would help, of course.'

'Then you will tell him how much I want to see him? And I'll write to him myself and ask him to come.'

From upstairs came the child's call, 'Mother!'

'Yes, dear, I'm coming.' Isabel rose; to Roger she said, 'Just for a few moments, if you'll excuse me; I always hear him say his prayers and tuck him in for the night.'

Roger moved quietly about the room after she had gone, examined some of the pictures with a half-hearted interest, and came to a pause before an open window looking out upon a square of lawn with a fountain in the center — the bronze figure of a boy, with his head thrown back in laughter and the water spraying from his lips. But he gave to the pretty little scene as to the pictures no real attention of the mind; he was asking himself what had possessed him to bring Hoyt into the conversation — and in a way that made her desire for a meeting with him inevitable. For sheer stupidity the act seemed unrivaled; he knew at the time that it was stupid, yet he had been somehow pushed into it by his wish to tell her something that would be sure to interest her and appeal to her.

From a sleeping-porch somewhere near the open window by which he stood the child's voice, clear and high, repeating the Lord's Prayer, reached his ears. It did not cease with the Amen, but continued, 'God, bless dear daddy in Heaven and make him happy,' and then:

> 'Let my sins be all forgiven,
> Bless the friends I love so well,
> Take me when I die to Heaven
> There with daddy dear to dwell.'

Roger stood motionless. When she had taught her little boy to say that prayer every night, how could any one tell her the truth! If Hoyt chose to do so, it should not be in ignorance of the faith that the truth would destroy.

When Isabel reëntered the drawing-room she carried a letter in her hand.

'I've put off telling you why I especially wanted to talk with you,' she said; a tinge of color in her usually pale cheeks indicated her embarrassment. 'I have a feeling I'm going to

ask you to do something you won't want to do and that you may find it hard to refuse. But I must ask you, for it's something that Jim wished.'

'If I can do anything to help you,' Roger answered, 'you needn't hesitate to ask it.'

'But I'm afraid you'll be staggered when you find how much help I want! I'll read from the last letter I ever had from Jim.' She took the letter out of the envelope and turned the page. '"If a Hun bullet should happen to get me, you'll find that except for a few small bequests everything goes to you and the boy, with you as executor. You'll need help in managing the estate, of course. I would suggest that if Roger Kendall comes back and I don't, you try to get him to act as your adviser and man of business. He's experienced in the care of property, able, sound, judicious; you can trust him."' She looked up at Roger. 'Of course I hope you'll consent, Major Kendall.'

'Surely I will. I'm going back to my desk to-morrow and in two or three days I expect to have the office in running order. Then if you'll come in we can go over things together.'

'Thank you ever so much. This letter of Jim's — it reached me the day that he was killed. It's so precious to me — showing how he was thinking of us in those last days — and I was sure you wouldn't refuse.'

She folded the letter gently and put it back into its envelope.

'There's just one thing, Mrs. Ashton,' Roger said as he rose to take his leave. 'If you should find yourself for any reason losing confidence in me — feeling that you couldn't have the confidence in me that you expected to have — I should want you to tell me so frankly.'

'There's no likelihood of that happening, Major Kendall.'

'Sometimes unlikely things do happen,' he said gravely. 'So please remember my request.'

'And thank you again for granting mine,' she answered, as she took his hand.

VII

Descending the steps with her willing captive, Adelaide said, 'It's stupid trotting about on city pavements. What do you say to our taking the car out into the country, parking it in some bosky glade, and then going for a walk where we may get close to nature?'

'It's a poetic idea,' said Francis. 'Perfectly Wordsworthian.'

'I'm glad Barker isn't in sight. He always seems to resent it when I take either of the big cars. As a matter of fact, I drive as well as he does.'

'Better,' said Francis.

'Aren't you ridiculous! You've never seen me drive.'

'No, but I'm gifted with a wonderful instinct sometimes. A sort of second sight, I suppose you might call it.'

Adelaide slipped into the driver's seat of the large touring car and Francis settled himself by her side. In a moment the car was rolling quietly down the driveway.

'Does your gift of prophecy tell you what road we are going to take?' asked Adelaide.

'It doesn't concern itself with matters that are of indifference to me,' replied Francis.

'Suppose we try the Barstow turnpike. That's less likely to be crowded than some of the other roads.'

Francis offered no dissent; in fact at her suggestion a curious expression, a gleam as of intelligence suddenly become active, appeared in his eyes.

For half an hour they drove through a landscape of farms and orchards. Then Francis said, 'The next road that you come to on your right — I've been over it a number of times. It's very pretty, and it's not at all bad going, and you'll meet almost no one on it.'

'All right; we'll try it,' Adelaide responded, and presently they were spinning over a road that led into the back country, into timberland.

'The bosky glade is just a little way ahead, on the left,' said Francis.

They came to a bridge across a stream; on either bank willows overhung the water; farther back on rising ground stretched a pleasant open woodland, pines and birches, through which the afternoon sunlight struck in shimmering shafts. Some of these fell on the face of the stream, silvering its ripples or marking out in vivid green the lily pads that rested on the quiet water of a cove.

'Here,' said Francis; 'here's the spot.'

He spoke so decisively that she did not question the decision; she drove the car out on the grass by the roadway, and shut off the engine.

'I don't know this place at all,' she said as she got out of the car.

'I know it well,' he answered. 'I've taken canoe trips on this river, and camped not very far from here. And it's a historic place in my little life.'

'In what way?'

'It's not altogether a creditable episode — but don't expect anything very interesting; it's not so frightfully discreditable either. Only it shows how I always consider myself in everything I do — even in times of the greatest crisis.'

'It sounds too interesting for words,' said Adelaide. 'I love personal revelation.'

'When the United States entered the war, I don't believe there was anybody, literally, in all America more scared at the idea of going than I.' He talked slowly, with the diffidence that had marked him when she had first encountered him; while he talked he walked with her towards a higher point of land round which the river bent. 'From the very beginning I was sure that I should never come back. Of course

I intended to go as a volunteer; my pride wouldn't let me wait to be drafted, but I couldn't make up my mind whether to try for an infantry officers' training camp or artillery officers' camp or a commission in the Navy or aviation. I had always thoroughly disliked military drill and discipline, and I felt I shouldn't be a good infantry officer. Besides, if you were in the infantry, you were liable not only to be killed but to be horribly wounded and suffer tortures before you died. I'm a perfect coward about facing and bearing physical pain. As for the artillery, mathematics, which was more or less essential, had never been my strong point. And for a person who desired to do his bit and at the same time was seeking the safest possible place in which to do it, life in the artillery didn't seem a much better risk than that in the infantry. There was the Navy — but I have never cared for the sea, and my imagination presented me with no ghastlier picture than that of myself on a ship blown up by a submarine or sunk by shell-fire. That left only aviation, and I give you my word that the thought of being tumbled down from the sky made the sweat start all over me. And nobody, I think, but myself knew what very poor material I was for a fighting man.'

'It must have made it hard for you,' Adelaide said sympathetically. 'How did you ever decide?'

'I gave up my job on the "Times" — I'd had it only a few months — and went home on a Saturday. I had resolved that over Sunday I would reach a decision and on Monday I'd enlist. My family were all for having me go into the infantry. For some reason they thought I'd be in less danger there than in any other branch of the service. When I suggested aviation, they got very much worked up. They told me I wasn't fitted for it — which I knew well enough, but what was I fitted for? We talked all Saturday evening, but I couldn't come to any conclusion. On Sunday morning I took the family Ford and drove out here to be alone and think things out for myself. I walked up through these woods, up to that

little knoll just ahead. It was a nice warm day, and the ground was dry — you see what a cautious person I always am about myself! — so when I got to the top of that knoll I lay down on the grass, flat on my back. And as I lay there, looking up at some fluffy white clouds, it suddenly came over me that as I probably wouldn't come back, whatever I did, I'd better do something in which there was some pleasure while it lasted. No matter how scared I was at the thought of flying, I knew there must be pleasure in it when you were able to do it — and I couldn't see that there would ever be any pleasure in being an officer of infantry or artillery. I went all over the question while I lay there, and all the arguments were in favor of flying. When I wasn't actually up in the air I'd be reasonably safe and moderately comfortable — more than could be said if I were in the infantry or artillery. There wouldn't be much dirty work or sleeping in the mud, aviators were less subject to galling military discipline than men in any other branch of the service; and when there were casualties, they were clean and complete — a few moments of terror and then everything over. So that's how I happened to become an aviator. And here —' he stepped out on the point overlooking the stream — 'is the spot where it happened.'

'I don't wonder at your wanting to revisit it,' said Adelaide. 'It seems as if you ought to put up a tablet or a monument on it. Were you much scared when you began to fly?'

'I was always scared. That's one reason why I came to be at last a reasonably good pilot. When there were stunts to be pulled off and risks to be taken, I was so scared that I was the most careful, accurate fellow you ever saw.'

'Anyway, you didn't allow yourself to be conquered by your fear.'

'Oh, yes, I did. I wasn't one of those who begged for an assignment overseas. When I was commissioned and assigned to instruct cadets, I was extremely well satisfied. So long as the authorities felt that I could stay on this side and

do my full duty, I had no desire to protest. There were a lot of fellows who exerted all kinds of pressure to be transferred from training-camp jobs to overseas service, but I wasn't one of them. In fact, I may as well admit frankly there isn't one drop of hero's blood in my whole body.'

'It's extremely interesting to get this information about you,' said Adelaide. 'It seems as if I ought to make some return. What can I tell you about myself?'

'Anything that you will.'

Her eyes danced and had a mischievous sparkle.

'There is really very little to tell. Most of my life I have lived quietly at home with my parents. There are few historic spots to look back upon. Like most girls I learned to hem, cross-stitch, and knit. From an early age I was horribly afraid of needles and other sharp instruments and constantly imagined the frightful hurts I might give myself with them; I handled them with extreme care and became rather good at hemming and cross-stitching in consequence.' She glanced at the young man; the flush and the expression of chagrin on his face daunted her somewhat, but she went cruelly on: 'Horses were another thing that filled me with terror, but I had to learn to ride, and so I decided that I had better get what fun I could out of riding. Then I found I must do cross-country riding; I was sure that going over a jump I would be thrown and killed or that the horse would stumble and fall on me, but just because I was so sure I concentrated on the technique of the thing, with the result that I don't know what it is to have a fall in the hunting field. It was the same way with high diving; nothing I loathed so much as getting my head under water, but with care and attention to detail I now, from almost any height, enter the water with such grace that I often wish I could see myself. I do most things rather well, but there really isn't an ounce of heroine's blood in my whole body.'

During her discourse she had been glancing at him mirth-

fully and smiling when she caught his sheepish eye; now she broke into cajoling laughter. 'Do I hurt your feelings? Tell me,' she said.

'No, you only make me feel that I'm a most frightful ass,' he answered ruefully. 'I didn't realize at all how smug and smirking and altogether horrible my bit of autobiography sounded.'

'Oh, no, but I couldn't resist teasing you because you were so obviously bent on belittling yourself — and there is a sort of upside-down egotism in doing that, isn't there?'

'There evidently is; your parody convinces me. But I honestly wasn't trying to belittle myself; I was just trying to tell the truth about myself.'

'Yes, I know — and you must try to forgive me for being so heartless and making fun of you. It seems as if there were a little imp inside me that's always egging me on to do things of that kind. And I certainly don't want to make you freeze up and feel that I'm trying to draw you out only to laugh at you. I'm not, really; I think you're a very interesting person; yes, I do. Now tell me you feel better.'

'Much better. But you know I don't mind your making fun of me — so long as I feel sure you're doing it only to tease.'

'You can be quite sure,' she said. And then she added contritely, 'And I do think it was mean to tease you about an episode that was so serious. You poor boy, coming out here all alone to make up your mind which way you'd be killed! It was pathetic, and I was heartless to laugh!'

Her voice was now soft and caressing; it had been gay and merry before.

'I shall always like to have you laugh at me,' he said, 'if it will make you feel afterwards that you've been heartless.'

'It isn't a pleasant feeling to have; I'm sure you don't really wish anything so unkind.'

'There again I was following my usual habit of considering

only myself. No, I certainly wouldn't wish anything that you thought was unkind.'

She bent to pluck a lady's slipper, and then holding the flower up she smiled at him. 'Here's something for your button-hole,' she said. 'It will go very nicely with your necktie. I'll put it in.'

It gave him a thrill of delight to feel and see her hands — white, slender, yet capable hands — at work in the adornment of his person.

'When it fades,' he said, 'I will preserve it forever in Browning's Poems, on the same page with "My Star."'

'What a nice thought!' A warmer color showed in her face.

They walked on through the woods; conversation was slight and fragmentary. The path narrowed, and for a time they could not walk abreast; Francis followed with eyes that noted admiringly the freedom of her step, the slim straightness of her figure, the graceful modeling of her neck, and the bright hair with its loose curling tendrils. Sometimes she would turn her head to glance back at him, and smile, as if pleased at finding that she had not lost him.

'How far are we going anyway?' she asked at last. 'I think it's probably time for us to be starting back — if I'm to get home for supper.'

'I have a suggestion to make,' Francis replied. 'We're nearer my house now than yours. Why shouldn't we drive on to it? Mother and Father will be delighted to see us; you can telephone home from there, and after supper you can drive home leisurely.'

'You mean, alone? I shouldn't want to make the trip alone after dark. I'm not sure that I should know the road.'

'Of course you wouldn't drive home alone. I should go back with you.'

'I don't know why that shouldn't be all right. Only won't your mother be surprised, not to say disconcerted, at the sudden appearance of a strange young woman for supper?'

'Surprised, perhaps, but pleased.'

'Well, then, if you feel quite sure of that.'

Half an hour later they drove down the main street of Franklin, crossed the river on the new iron bridge above the falls, and turned away from the paper mill into a shaded street at the upper end of the town. On either side were comfortable wooden houses, set back in neatly kept grounds; beside one there was a tennis court, beside another a little formal garden, with paths and trellises. It was the street evidently on which the substantial citizens of the small town had made their homes.

'The next on the right is ours,' said Francis.

It was a gray, gabled house, built with one end towards the street; the driveway ran straight past the front of it on to the garage at the extreme rear of the grounds. A border of pink tulips was gay against the veranda, and the plain lines of the house were softened by the shrubs and shade trees that grew about it.

Adelaide stopped the car in front of the veranda. Almost immediately, Francis's father and mother made their appearance, eager to welcome visitors — Mr. Brent a thick-set, round-faced man with a pleasant smile, his wife tall, ruddy of countenance, with hair still brown and a figure that had still successfully warded off matronliness; Adelaide's first thought was, 'How much younger they are than my father and mother!'

They greeted Adelaide cordially, thanked her for her kindness in bringing Francis home to them so unexpectedly, were delighted that she could stay for supper. She explained that she would have to telephone and let her family know where she was — would Mrs. Brent mind very much? — and was she really sure she wanted her to stay? She followed Mrs. Brent into the house and down the hall to a recess behind the stairs where the telephone was placed. Mrs. Brent left her there and returned to the veranda.

'Who is she, Francis?' She put the question to her son in an eager whisper — the same question that her husband had asked with equal eagerness the moment that Adelaide had entered the house.

'Daughter of Dr. Kendall, rector of Saint Paul's.' Francis whispered the information for the second time.

'She's lovely, perfectly lovely,' his mother said under her breath. 'Lots of questions I want to ask.'

'Fine car she drives,' said his father, likewise in a subdued tone, studying the automobile. 'Advise you to stick to Fords, my boy.'

'I expect to — my first trip in this,' Francis replied. 'Where's Louise?'

'Oh, young Tom Prescott called and took her out for a walk.'

'She ought to be home by now,' said Mrs. Brent. 'She knows that she's expected to help get supper on Frieda's Sunday out.'

'Perhaps,' said Mr. Brent, with a twinkle in his eye, 'she'll telephone that she's staying for supper at the Prescotts'.'

'I shouldn't like that at all,' said Mrs. Brent decisively.

'Of course she's too young for that kind of thing,' said Francis, on the defensive at once at the disapproving implication.

Within the house the telephone bell rang, signifying that the long distance connection had been made.

'Hello!' Adelaide's voice sounded, clear and definite. 'Is Mrs. Kendall there, Bertha? — Oh, hello, Mother. I shan't be home for supper. I'm in Franklin. — Yes, about forty miles, but that isn't far. — I'm at Mr. Brent's house, going to have supper with his family. — You needn't be uneasy; he'll come back with me. I'll be home before ten o'clock. — All right; good-bye.'

Adelaide came out on the veranda. 'Mother was as much surprised, I think, as you were, Mrs. Brent,' she said.

'Except that she's rather more used to me and so has learned to expect the improbable.'

'If she's cross with you, tell her how grateful we were because you let us have this unexpected glimpse of Francis,' said Mrs. Brent.

'Yes,' said Francis. 'And if it's necessary you can call me in to testify. I'll tell her what your kind act meant to a homesick young man in a strange city, who was pining for a glimpse of his parents.'

Mrs. Brent laughed. 'Were you, dear? And when was it that you last wrote to us? Never mind'; she put her arm through his. 'I know when you're homesick work is a better cure than letter-writing.'

'It looks to me as if with Miss Kendall's help he'd found a better cure than work,' remarked his father.

Francis winced; he wished his father, who really was not much given to small town facetiousness, had resisted the temptation to indulge in witticism.

Mrs. Brent withdrew to prepare the supper; Louise, Francis's sixteen-year-old sister, arrived, was introduced, greeted the guest shyly and observed her keenly, then went to join her mother. She returned in a few minutes to announce that supper was ready; when they entered the dining-room the candles were lighted and Mrs. Brent was drawing down the shades.

'A very small supper seems less cheerless if it isn't eaten by fading daylight,' said Mrs. Brent.

Louise looked across the centerpiece of lilacs at Adelaide with admiring eyes, and Adelaide smiled at her and said,

'I can guess that you're interested in one of three things — painting, drawing, or writing. Aren't you?'

'Why, yes, I am.' Louise looked startled and pleased.

'I think that the thing you most want to do is painting.'

Louise's expression of wonderment deepened. 'Did Francis tell you?'

'Don't you know that brothers never think their sisters are worth talking about to other girls? I have an older brother, and I learned that long ago.'

'Then how did you guess?'

'You have such noticing eyes.'

Louise blushed, fearing that Miss Kendall had resented her scrutiny as rude. 'I don't really mean to stare,' she said.

'Artists never stare,' said Adelaide. 'There's a different look in their eyes. That's why I was able to guess about you.'

Louise was more deeply embarrassed than ever.

'You seem to be a pretty noticing person yourself, Miss Kendall,' said Mr. Brent. 'Which is it with you — art or literature?'

'Neither; I'm not gifted — just sympathetic and appreciative. Though your son doesn't think I'm even that.'

'Why not?' asked Mr. Brent.

'Yes; why not?' Francis challenged her.

'I've been rather horrid to him this afternoon; I've ridiculed him, and I wonder if you've ever noticed he doesn't like to be ridiculed?'

'All men are alike in that,' said Mrs. Brent. 'And they especially hate being ridiculed by women.'

'Yes. He was thoroughly human and very cross.'

'You seem anyway to have brought him home in a good humor.'

'His getting home is entirely accountable for that. He was quite discontented when I made it a condition of bringing him that he should drive back with me. But as I didn't know the road and didn't care to be quite so far away from home all alone after dark I insisted.'

'And I am glad to say that I was unselfish and chivalrous enough to yield,' said Francis.

Soon after supper Adelaide announced that she must start upon the return journey. She was exceedingly sorry to take a son away from the bosom of his family, but on the other hand

a daughter's family would be likely to go quite wild if she wasn't nestling in their bosom by ten o'clock. Both Mr. Brent and his wife said that they understood perfectly and that they hoped they might see her again in Franklin — either with or without Francis.

Louise said nothing; she stood by, trying hard not to stare, but unable to take her admiring eyes for very long away from this attractive stranger who had read her heart and recognized her talent so marvelously. And it was to Louise that Adelaide, seated behind the steering wheel, addressed her last word.

'Some time in the fall, Louise, when you come over to the city you must let me know beforehand, and I'll arrange to take you round to see some pictures. I like to look at pictures too.'

Louise stood entranced, while the automobile rolled slowly down the driveway.

VIII

'You have certainly captivated my family,' Francis remarked to Adelaide as they drove away from the house.

'I can't help trying to do that sort of thing,' she answered in a tone devoid of triumph. 'It's my most besetting weakness. You know how you criticized me for it yesterday — a little while after we'd met; you shouldn't now be talking as if you liked it — just because your family were the objects of my attack.'

'I was very foolish and presumptuous to criticize you. Why is it a weakness to be so winning in manner that people like you at once?'

'Because I have an unreasoning desire to be liked and I always make an effort to give people a pleasant impression of me. And that often means that people think I have a much more pleasant impression of them than I really have. So often I find myself in the hole that the hypocrite always digs for himself. Then I have to go on pretending to like people that I've deliberately caused to like me — a course of action that becomes a dreadful bore; or else I have to do something severe and wounding — all because I can't resist the initial temptation to get myself liked.'

'Now,' said Francis, 'if I had your gift of mimicry and burlesque, how I could take you off! The poor, unfortunate girl who simply can't help being charming — and pity 'tis, 'tis true!'

'But you know you don't like that trait in a person. In fact, you as much as told me so yesterday.'

'I don't know what I may have told you yesterday. I like it to-day. I know you better to-day.'

'Do you? I wonder.'

She drove on in silence; the shadows deepened; presently

there was an enveloping darkness except for the ghostly light streaming before them along the pallid roadway.

'Draw up by the roadside for a few moments, won't you?' said Francis.

His heart was knocking against his breast, his voice sounded muffled in his ears. A sudden desperate resolve to put his fate to the touch had mastered him; there might not soon again be a more favorable moment than this.

She turned out as far as possible, applied the brakes, and stopped the engine.

'I simply must talk with you for a few minutes and I couldn't do it while you were driving,' Francis said. 'You know already how I feel about you, Adelaide. I love you; it's taken only two days, but you fill my whole mind and heart. I love you, I want you, I want you more than anything in all the world.'

He reached for her hand and seized it; she did not draw it away, but she replied with a cool laugh,

'But it is perfectly ridiculous, you know, for you to feel so, when we never saw each other before yesterday!'

'It's not ridiculous at all — seeing you, hearing you speak, hearing you laugh, looking into your eyes — any one of those things is enough to make any man love you! And I love you for all of them, and for the way your mind works, and the kindness in your heart, and the things you say, and — I love you, I love you, I love you!'

Clasping her hand, he drew her to him; she did not resist.

'You love me,' he said, 'a little?'

'I don't know. Perhaps — a little.'

At once he had her in his arms, embracing her so violently, kissing her so passionately that after a moment she gasped, startled, yet with an accent of humor in her voice,

'But — my dear! — I didn't know it was like this!'

'It is like this!' He drew her to him and held her tight and she murmured, 'Yes, dear, I do like you to love me — I do!'

She clung to him now as he to her; undisturbed they sat, themselves in darkness, the pathway of light opening up a short distance before them; the quiet murmur of the wind in the trees was the only comment on their hushed and gentle talk.

'I love everything about you — your looks and your voice and your laugh — the things you say and the things you do.'

'I love to be loved — especially by you.'

'You will always be loved by everybody — but especially by me.'

'Can you be sure, Francis? Just think, we don't know each other very well, do we?'

'I think we do, Adelaide. When people are drawn to each other at once, it doesn't take them a long time to know and understand each other.'

'I wonder if you really know and understand me!'

'Just the way I recognize a lovely garden when I see it, even though it might take me days and weeks or even years to become familiar with all the flowers and all the art that have made it lovely.'

'There are a great many weeds,' she said. 'You'll help me to get rid of them; you'll not be too much bothered by them, will you, dear?'

'You're all lilies and roses, fresh with the morning dew,' declared Francis.

'My poet!' She laughed in gentle gay derision and looked up at him with eyes that in the darkness shone soft and lustrous. Speech ended there; pressure of hands, kisses, and caresses plighted more convincingly than words their love. The light streamed quietly out into the road ahead, the wind murmured quietly in the trees, the lovers sat clasping each other in silence, which was broken only now and then by the recurrent litany: 'I love you.' 'Do you, dear? I love you too.'

At last Adelaide said, 'We mustn't sit here any longer, Francis. My family will begin to worry about me.'

'Shall you tell them at once? I somehow doubt if they will be very much pleased.'

'Father will probably grumble; the others won't be anything more than surprised.'

'Getting a raise in salary suddenly assumes a new importance.'

'Of course you'll get it. And we'll have a tiny little apartment and one little maid and I will press your clothes for you and do your mending and keep you looking neat and clean so that all your office friends will envy you such a trusty little wife!'

'And not just my office friends either. But you know you'll have to sacrifice a lot — automobiles and pretty clothes and theaters and other things that are a part of your everyday life.'

'It will be no great sacrifice. And besides I know that it will be only for a little while. You're going ahead; you'll be prosperous enough. Only I do hope I can somehow be of help to you in your work! Perhaps I can supply a literary allusion now and then — an occasional apt quotation from Browning! I suppose we're perfect fools. People will think so, anyway.'

'Nobody will be likely to question my judgment. But I can see why your friends may feel that you're a rash young person.'

'Never mind if they do. We shall both of us have a lifetime to prove to them that I wasn't.'

It was nearer eleven o'clock than ten when Adelaide drove into her home avenue and up to the garage.

'It's so late, do you think I'd better come in now?' said Francis after he had closed the door of the garage for her.

'You're the only excuse I have; I certainly think you had better come in,' she answered.

He entered the house a step behind her; almost immediately the entire family confronted them in the hall, Dr. Kendall and Mrs. Kendall in the van, Laura and Roger remaining

near the doorway of the sitting-room — but all stricken speechless evidently at the entrance of Adelaide's escort. Francis felt that whereas graciousness had instantly overcome Mrs. Kendall's surprise on seeing him appear for luncheon, displeasure now instantly succeeded the astonishment on her face; as for Dr. Kendall, his expression did not indicate that any hospitable sentiments were stirring within him.

'You weren't worried about me, were you?' said Adelaide blithely. 'You needn't have been; I had a very good person taking care of me. — Step up, Francis'; she turned and slipped her arm into his and then went on: 'He's going to take care of me, and I'm going to take care of him — always.' And then, as if she wished them all to be quite sure of her meaning, she gave him a kiss.

Francis felt it was necessary for him to break in upon the uncanny silence that followed. 'Yes,' he said, hurrying the words and not deliberating at all over the choice of them, 'I'm afraid it's the most hideous shock to you all — just as it's the most wonderful, joyous surprise to me — I mean Adelaide's willingness — it's an awfully short time, I know, but I couldn't help feeling this way about her from the first, and — '

He came to a stop helplessly.

'I get you, old man,' Roger cried heartily. 'You're engaged!' He advanced with a smile, and Laura, smiling too, followed him. 'It's mighty nice to have a brother in the family,' he said as he squeezed Francis's hand. Then he kissed Adelaide and said, 'Bless you, my children!' Meanwhile Laura was kissing Francis and saying, 'I like my new brother too, and I'm awfully glad you've made Adelaide so happy!' Next the two sisters were in each other's arms, and Mrs. Kendall was giving Francis her hand, and speaking with sudden cordiality in her voice; 'I shouldn't have waited for Roger to show me the way, Francis, but after all I'm older than he and my reactions aren't so quick as those of a younger

person. You're welcome into the family, my dear boy. — Come, Damon,' she said to her husband.

Not until Dr. Kendall advanced and put out his hand did Mrs. Kendall relinquish Francis's hand and give her attention to her daughter.

'I am bound to say,' remarked Dr. Kendall after briefly complying with his wife's command, 'that I can give only qualified approval. I cannot help fearing that you and my daughter have taken this step somewhat lightly and unadvisedly. At least I do not feel able to congratulate you both as I might have done had you been less precipitate.'

'Father dear, I've had opportunities to be precipitate before,' cried Adelaide. 'I'm precipitate only when both my judgment and my feelings make me so.'

'People have sometimes been mistaken in their judgment and their feelings,' replied Dr. Kendall. 'But it's late now, and we needn't enter upon a discussion. Perhaps Mr. —' he hesitated and then made a concession — 'perhaps Francis will be good enough to call at my office at Saint Paul's tomorrow afternoon. Then we can talk matters over and I hope that I shall find no reason to withhold any measure of approval of an arrangement which seems to satisfy the rest of the family.'

'I hope not, sir,' said Francis. 'I shall be glad to come.'

'Good-night.'

Francis flushed; he felt that he was being shown the door.

'Good-night, dear.' Adelaide kissed him.

He walked away from the Kendalls' house, throbbing, tingling; his head was among the stars. His whole life had been changed unexpectedly, enchantingly; a glory had come into it, unbelievable; the memory of Adelaide's kisses and embraces suffused him with exultation, joy, rapture; he praised God and the moon and the stars and the night, the beautiful, mysterious universe, this nineteenth day of May, henceforth and forever most wonderful of all the days in the

calendar. He must deserve her love, he would deserve it; he would strive and achieve. He walked until long after midnight; when at last he sought his bed, it was not at once to sleep, but to lie with eyes open while imagination roamed far beyond the walls of his small monastic room.

IX

At the appointed hour Francis Brent walked up the path to the parish house of Saint Paul's — a substantial stone building connected with the rear of the church by a walled cloister. The day had turned cloudy and now rain was beginning to fall. Francis walked briskly, wishing that he had set out with either umbrella or raincoat, for it was his intention after the impending interview had been concluded to report to Adelaide at her house half a mile distant.

He entertained no very cordial expectations as to the welcome that he should receive from Dr. Kendall. On the door to the right of the broad hall the sign, 'Rector's Office. Walk in,' was hospitable enough. When Francis entered, he found himself in an anteroom, most of which was fenced off. Behind the fence a young woman paused at her task of typewriting to look at him inquiringly. She had an earnest face; there was a downward droop to her long nose and a downward droop to her mouth and a backward slope to her chin; her eyes were mild.

'Is Dr. Kendall in?' asked Francis.

'He's stepped out for a few moments. Won't you be seated?'

Sitting on the bench by the door, Francis wondered why in offices visitors were usually requested to be seated and in drawing-rooms to sit down; he thought he might try to work up a paragraph for the 'Times' on these usages and kindred matters. The secretary returned to her typewriting; Francis looked through a doorway into the inner office, where a large flat-topped mahogany desk occupied the center of the room. He could see a comfortable leather couch in one corner and near the desk a leather armchair, broad and deep.

The minutes passed.

'Did Dr. Kendall mention having an appointment with me? My name is Brent,' said Francis.

'No, I believe not. But he left word that he would be in soon.'

The conscientious secretary hardly paused from her typewriting to give the answer.

Presently Dr. Kendall entered. Francis rose, but Dr. Kendall, with a brusque, indeed a barely perceptible nod of recognition, walked smartly past him and on into the inner office, where he disappeared from view. Francis, disconcerted and chagrined, sat down again. Soon there was the sound of a buzzer, and the secretary rose and went into the inner office. On her reappearance she said,

'Dr. Kendall will see you now.'

The clergyman was standing looking out of a window with his back towards the door when Francis entered. He turned immediately, however, pointed to a straight-backed chair against the wall, and said, 'Be seated, please.' Francis complied with the request; Dr. Kendall, in grave silence, crossed the room and closed the door. He then proceeded to speak, pacing slowly back and forth, his hands in his trousers pockets.

'I am bound to say that I was not at all pleased at the news that you and my daughter communicated to me last night. On further consideration I see no reason to modify my first impression. Your acquaintance with each other has been brief; your knowledge of each other must of necessity be inadequate. You have each of you allowed a superficial mutual attraction to commit you to a position from which one, if not both of you, will in the course of time surely wish to withdraw.'

'Certainly I could never wish to withdraw,' said Francis.

'Very well, then; since you leave me no choice I will put frankly what was in my mind. I have no doubt that my daughter, when she has time to reflect, will wish to break this

engagement. She will recognize the unsuitability of such a marriage. You are, if I may ask, how old?'

'Twenty-three.'

'My daughter is twenty-four. I will not deny that there have been happy marriages when the wife has been older than the husband, but it is a reversal of the normal order, and there is always danger in any reversal of the normal order. More important than the disparity in age is the difference in background. A small country town such as that which has been your home does not offer the kind of life to which my daughter has always been accustomed. And although you are now settled here, you are not in a position to maintain her in such a manner as that to which she has been brought up. Journalism is the poor relation of the learned professions. I would not willingly deliver my daughter into the hands of a journalist — especially an unestablished journalist. A young lawyer, a young doctor, a young architect — if they had good connections and were men of promise in their professions — it would be very different.'

'From what you said yesterday I supposed that you had quite a regard for the newspaper profession,' said Francis.

'Oh, we have to have newspapers,' replied Dr. Kendall, with a wave of the hand as if dismissing the interruption as trivial. 'But in journalism there is a career for relatively few. The young man starts in as a reporter and he continues a reporter. It's a life of superficiality and triviality and haste. Of course, to be the editor of a great newspaper is to hold an honorable position — a position of influence and power. But short of the attainment of such a position, the journalist's life is a thing of shreds and patches — not that of a constructive worker who grows with his work. "A snapper up of unconsidered trifles" — yes, your "colyumist," your newspaper paragrapher — from their writings the active man of affairs derives a few moments of entertainment while he glances over his morning paper before settling down to the day's work.

Your reporter who attends meetings and who interviews public men and men of affairs — he is a useful bit of machinery for broadcasting the ideas of others. Your reporter who visits the police stations and the courts and grinds out the daily grist of crime and accidents and suicide and divorce — perhaps it's a useful work that he performs, but so is that of a collector of garbage. Your reporter who specializes in sports, professional ball games, prize fights, and so on — well, it seems to me that if a man's interest lies in that direction it's more dignified to be a ball player or a prize fighter than to write about them.'

'I'm sorry you take such a gloomy view of newspaper work,' said Francis. 'I admit I shouldn't want to be just a reporter all my life. — '

'Ah, that's the very fact that justifies me in my position!' cried Dr. Kendall, stopping before Francis; he held his left hand upturned in front of him and at intervals brought the fingers of his right hand gently down upon the palm. 'But if you were a doctor you'd want and expect to be a doctor all your life; if you were a lawyer you'd expect to be a lawyer all your life; if you were a teacher you'd expect to be a teacher all your life; if you were a clergyman you'd expect to be a clergyman all your life. Your remark illustrates the lack of stability that is the weakness of the journalist and his profession. Nearly all of them go into it not with any expectation or desire to make it their life work, but because they think vaguely that a little experience of it will be a valuable preparation for something else — anything else. And usually it isn't. Once in a while it leads to some exceptional opportunity. But there are lucky accidents in every calling, and it won't do to expect to be the beneficiary of one of those.'

'I think you took advantage of my failure to complete what I was going to say,' replied Francis. 'I was going to say that I hoped to advance in my profession of journalism, from reporter to staff correspondent, from staff correspondent to

editor. I didn't say that I hoped I shouldn't always be a journalist. At present I have no desire to be anything else — though if one of the lucky accidents that you mention should choose me for its beneficiary I probably shouldn't decline.'

He was aware before he had finished his speech that Dr. Kendall who had resumed pacing up and down the room had ceased to listen.

'Even for those who profess a real enthusiasm for journalism, success is more problematical than it is for well-qualified aspirants in other fields. Newspapers fail, change hands, are absorbed by other newspapers; good men, competent men, find themselves out of a job. There again the element of instability is greater than in other lines of work. And success — the prospect of success — is the most vital consideration to marriage. My daughter is not a young woman who would be content as the wife of a worthy but obscure and poorly paid employee of the father of some friend of hers. It would be more than a matter of pride with her. The realization that she was mated with one who, however hard he struggled, couldn't pull his share of the load would inevitably provoke in her a feeling of disdain — after the first flush of illusion had passed. A wife's disdain of her husband's ability — capacity — it is not an agreeable thing to contemplate.' Dr. Kendall paused for a moment as if his own words had suddenly induced in him a wry reflection; his brows contracted gloomily.

'I think you're needlessly pessimistic, Dr. Kendall. I am confident that I can earn a decent living.'

'By what standard? That is what I meant by my allusion to the importance of the husband's being able to pull his fair share of the load. Am I wrong in thinking that what you would regard as a decent living would fall far short of bestowing upon my daughter the comforts, luxuries, and opportunities to which she has been accustomed?'

'Perhaps some of them are not so important to her as you think.'

'The intimation that you can offer something more important to her does not convince me.'

'No,' said Francis, 'I fear, Dr. Kendall, that you will never be able to look at me with your daughter's eyes.'

Dr. Kendall's glance showed that he deprecated strongly anything in the nature of facetiousness.

'As the father of a girl brought up to take a certain position, I am justified in requiring that a young man seeking to marry her should be able to maintain her in that position. I gather that at present you are not able to do this, and that there is no probability of your being able to do it in the near future. It is improper for a young man who is just beginning to support himself, who has no particular prospects, to pay court to a young woman whose whole environment is, if you will allow me to say so, quite different from his own, who may be said to have expectations, who, ah — well, I probably make myself clear.'

'Quite so,' said Francis, his color and his temper rising.

'Very well, then. You should make amends as far as you can.'

'For falling in love with your daughter?'

'For not concealing the fact — until such time as it might have been fitting for you to disclose it.'

'I can't see that I'm guilty of anything very reprehensible,' said Francis. 'But if I am, what amends do you suggest?'

'That you stay away from her entirely and hold no communication with her until you are at least able to support a wife in a becoming manner.'

'You think that if I did that she would probably decide she didn't care for me after all?'

'I feel quite certain of it. This becoming engaged on a two days' acquaintance — why, it's monstrous. A little leisure for reflection, undisturbed by communication with you, and she'll recognize it for the aberration it is.'

Francis rose from the uncomfortable chair in which he

knew that Dr. Kendall had placed him with the purpose of treating him as a callow country youth. He proceeded to adopt Dr. Kendall's tactics of pacing up and down the room while he talked — obviously to the annoyance and wrath of the clergyman, who came to a halt by the corner of his desk and stood there watching the young man with angry eyes.

'But you seem to think, Dr. Kendall, that my object in getting engaged is to conduct myself in such a way that the engagement shall be broken as soon as possible. That isn't at all my plan. I want and mean to marry your daughter. So it would be quite absurd for me to follow your advice.'

'You are disrespectful, sir!' cried Dr. Kendall in a quivering voice.

Francis increased his pace. 'It surely isn't disrespectful to decline to accept a suggestion. I should like to have your approval, Dr. Kendall. But I don't regard it as vital. And Adelaide, as you have reminded me, is of an age to decide matters for herself.'

'There is no occasion for any further discussion.' Dr. Kendall's anger flamed in his face and in his speech. 'If I cannot forbid you to communicate with my daughter, I can at least forbid you to communicate with myself.'

Francis without comment turned and passed out of the door, which he closed behind him. A glance at the windows streaming with rain caused him to approach the secretary with a request. 'May I use your telephone to call a taxi?'

'Surely.' She pushed the instrument towards him.

While he waited for the taxicab to arrive, he walked up and down in the cloister, his mind busy with the unpleasant situation that Dr. Kendall's inhospitable attitude had created. It had been his intention to conciliate Adelaide's father; he had been quite unprepared for a disagreeable outcome, and he believed that Adelaide would be equally unprepared for it.

The rain poured down, trampling with innumerable tiny feet on the gravel driveway. An automobile turned in at the

entrance and drove up to the steps of the parish house; Francis recognized it as the car in which he had sat the day before, the car for which he must always have a tender sentiment! It was driven now, not by Adelaide, but by a chauffeur, and Francis knew that it had not come for him. He remained at the farther end of the cloister, hoping to escape observation when Dr. Kendall emerged.

Dr. Kendall came out of the house walking slowly with head bent; he was on the point of entering the car when he glanced up and along the cloister and saw Francis. He stood for a moment, looking at him sharply, debating evidently whether to address him or not; he got into the car, however, without speaking and drove away. Francis remained, wondering whether he had almost been invited to take a seat in the car or to step out into the rain. 'One is just about as likely as the other,' he reflected. 'And I shall never know which impulse the old man resisted.'

A few moments later Francis dismissed his taxicab at the steps of the Kendalls' house. The maid asked him to enter and showed him into a small morning room; she would see if Miss Adelaide was in. She returned with the message that Miss Adelaide would come to him in a moment, but the minutes passed and Adelaide did not appear. Presently the sound of Dr. Kendall's voice, upraised as if in anger, reached Francis, but it came from a distance and from behind closed doors and the words were indistinguishable. The voice continued, rapid and high-pitched, evidently delivering a harangue. Suddenly, at the opening of a door, an ejaculation, twice uttered, in Dr. Kendall's most impassioned tone, was launched upon the air: 'Absolutely not! Absolutely not!' Quiet ensued, and then footsteps — quick, light footsteps, not ponderous, pompous ones — approaching along the hall.

Adelaide appeared before him, flushed, a stormy light in her blue eyes that softened at once as he came to her.

'You needn't tell me, Francis; he's told me himself,' she

said. 'And there's no use in trying to reason with him — not the slightest.'

'But perhaps he'll gradually abandon his opposition.'

'No. He never gives in. Sit down and talk to me.' She drew him down on the sofa beside her and took his hand. 'When he makes up his mind about a person, he's like granite; nothing ever changes him. Tell me, Francis; have you your courage with you?'

'Always — when you're with me.'

'You mustn't think I'm quite mad. But I cannot go on living in this house with Father holding the attitude toward me — toward both of us — that he has taken. You see, I know what he is like when he clashes with any one. From that time on, so far as that person is concerned, the clash fills his mind. A life of that sort — continuous jarring, nagging, bickering, sneering — I cannot endure. Do you see what I mean when I ask if you have your courage with you?'

'You mean — you're ready to marry me at once?'

'Yes, dear. If you want me.'

'If I want you!' He clasped her in his arms with the same wild ecstasy that had startled and amused her the day before. Now it seemed to awaken a similar emotion in her breast; she clung to him as he to her and murmured, 'Yes, take me away soon, Francis.'

'I wish it could be to-night!' he answered, pressing her close to him.

'Why not? I would go with you.'

'The law wouldn't allow it. We must have a marriage license and then we must wait five days before we can be married. So we shall have to wait until next Monday, anyway.'

'How trying! That means one prolonged scene for nearly a week!'

'Still, that's not very much time in which to look round and find a place to live in and make all the arrangements and de-

cide where we'll go on our honeymoon. I'm afraid it will have to be a short one.'

'We'll have a long one later, after we've been married a while.'

'Shall you mind living in a small way, Adelaide — a very small way?'

'I shan't care how I live, Francis, as long as I can live with you.'

'My dearest! Why you should feel so I can't imagine, except that you're the kindest and sweetest, as well as the loveliest and bravest person in all the world.'

'Try always to think that — even after you've learned how horrid I can sometimes be! — There now; you must stop making love to me, and we must both be sensible and begin to plan. First of all: whom shall we get to marry us?'

'You really feel sure your father?' —

'Oh, my dear, he's out of the question. He won't be at the wedding. You see, you really don't know him, and I do. When he takes a thing hard, as he's taken this — it makes him hard. No, we must think of some one else. I wonder if that nice Mr. Hoyt wouldn't do it for us.'

'Any clergyman would do it for us.'

'I should like to have Mr. Hoyt. And I think we'd better be married in a church. We'll ask him to marry us in his church. Perhaps I'll have Roger see him and make the arrangements; Roger and he are such friends. Shall we say next Monday then — at twelve o'clock?'

'I have no other engagement. How practical you are!'

'Marriage is a practical affair. So we must talk about how and where we're to live. Just what can we afford to do, Francis?'

'My salary and the income I receive from a small legacy give me about twenty-five hundred a year. I suppose we had better try to find a little apartment somewhere, hadn't we?'

'I think so. We shan't be so badly off. I have about fifteen

hundred a year of my own. And you'll be earning more and more money all the time. Perhaps I will earn something myself. I must have some occupation; I can't put in all day and every day just housekeeping in a little flat.'

'No,' Francis admitted, 'I suppose you can't. And yet it doesn't seem right that you should have to go to work — just as a consequence of getting married!'

'But you don't look on your work, Francis, as an unpleasant necessity that's forced on you, do you, dear?'

'No; I rather like it, and I expect to like it still more as I get ahead.'

'Then why shouldn't you want me to have the same sort of pleasant experience, instead of just sitting idly at home?'

'It does seem unreasonable of me,' he admitted. 'I shall always want you to do what will make you most happy, Adelaide.'

'Of course!' she agreed, and she laughed and caressed his hand. 'That's why we're getting married — to be happy ourselves and to make each other happy.'

They drew apart at the sound of approaching footsteps. Mrs. Kendall appeared in the doorway, and smiled as the young man rose.

'I will interrupt just for a moment,' she said, and advanced toward him and took his hand. 'I want you to know that I'm perfectly satisfied, from what Adelaide has told me about you and from my own impressions, and that I shall always do everything I can to help you — you and Adelaide.'

'It won't surprise you, Mother,' Adelaide said, 'to know that we've decided to be married just as soon as possible.'

'And how soon is that?'

'Francis will get the marriage license to-morrow, and Monday of next week is the earliest day that we can be married. So we've decided on next Monday.'

'I do think there's something a little undignified about such

haste, Adelaide. I can sympathize with your desire to be married soon; but let's have a proper wedding. Make it a month instead of a week from to-day; that will give us time to get out invitations, make all the proper arrangements — and it won't give your friends any reason to feel hurt or to make ill-natured comments.'

'But, Mother, you know how Father feels, and a month of constant nagging and opposition from him — I'm afraid of the effect it will have on me — on my feeling for Father, not for Francis.'

'It's of both your father and Francis that I'm thinking chiefly when I ask you to wait a month. We may bring your father round to a reasonable position. There's no chance of that if you insist on getting married immediately; he would regard such action as a challenge, and he would resent it. And also if you're so precipitate, many of the people who know you and who don't know Francis will think there must be something queer about the man you're marrying; some of your friends will be likely to look at him askance. He's still virtually a stranger here, in the city that he's to make his home, and at the outset of your married life you don't want to subject him to a perfectly unnecessary handicap. Getting married with such scant ceremony would almost be like notifying your friends and acquaintances that although you yourself are willing to marry Francis and live with him, you're not very anxious to have them meet him. I assure you, Adelaide, that even when a girl is marrying the right man, there's a wrong way as well as a right way of getting married.'

'Mother dear, you're so wise sometimes you almost irritate me,' exclaimed Adelaide. 'I suppose you're right; it wouldn't be fair to Francis.'

'I can't see that it would affect me very seriously,' Francis said. 'But a month isn't so very long to wait, is it?'

'It would have been better if you'd left that for me to say,' commented Adelaide.

'I meant that it's not so very long when there is such assurance of happiness to look forward to at the end of it.'

Mrs. Kendall laughed. 'It's well that you have a nimble tongue, Francis. Had you got so far as to consider where and by whom you would be married?'

'Yes,' Adelaide answered. 'At Saint Stephen's, by Mr. Hoyt.'

Mrs. Kendall shook her head resolutely. 'You will have to be married in Saint Paul's. The parish would feel too strongly about that. They would forgive your father if he couldn't perform the ceremony owing to ill health or unavoidable absence — though I don't myself believe that at the last he will fail us.'

'I see, Mother, that you're bent on taking my wedding into your own hands,' said Adelaide. 'But suppose you're all wrong in your expectation about Father; suppose he won't give in; suppose he won't even allow us to be married in Saint Paul's —'

'There's a limit to my credulity, Adelaide, and I'm sure there is to Francis's, too. Now this evening, if I may offer a suggestion, I think you had each of you better write notes to your friends announcing the engagement — you know one's friends do appreciate that personal attention, Adelaide. And if you've fixed on four weeks from to-day as the wedding day, I will visit the stationer's to-morrow and arrange about the invitations. Then your wedding dress — your Aunt Harriet has some lovely lace that I'm sure she'll want you to wear. — No, four weeks is quite a short enough time in which to do everything that has to be done. Don't you agree with me, Francis?'

'May I agree with your mother, Adelaide?'

'Don't be silly, dear. Of course, Mother, if you want to give me a big wedding I shall be delighted; I should like it much better than just quietly trotting round the corner and being married in a traveling dress in the presence of the legal number of witnesses.'

'That's all I wanted to be sure of. Now I can go ahead. — A little later, Francis, you must dine with us — often. But to-day I won't ask you. Don't neglect to write those notes this evening.'

'I must get back to the office and do some other writing first,' said Francis.

'Must you go now? It's raining so awfully hard.'

'I'll call a taxi. May I use your telephone?'

'I'll drive you down town,' said Adelaide. 'You mustn't be extravagant; you must save all you can in the next four weeks.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Kendall. 'Be thrifty, Francis. Save the taxis for the honeymoon.'

She stood on the veranda and waved to Adelaide and Francis as they drove off in the rain. When she turned and went into the house she found her husband waiting for her in the hall, by the door of his study. He was frowning and his tone conveyed a reprimand.

'What have you been doing? Encouraging them in their folly?'

'Yes, I've been encouraging them.'

'Sentimentality — maudlin female sentimentality! Go on with it if you like; but I don't sanction this match, Mary, remember that. And I shall do everything I can to break it.'

'You would do better to accept it gracefully, Damon.'

The quietness with which she spoke did nothing to assuage his ire; he retreated into his study and closed the door against her.

X

It seemed to Dr. Kendall a singularly ironical fact that no sooner had his family become reunited under one roof than rebellion against the head should break out. Never before had he been so beset in his own house; his wife, his son, even the sweet-tempered Laura, all made common cause with the insurgent daughter against him. After dinner, when Adelaide had withdrawn to her room to write her letters, and the others had gone into the library, Mrs. Kendall did not delay in opening her attack.

'Adelaide has fixed on the seventeenth of June — that's four weeks from to-day — for her wedding day, Damon,' she said quietly, while her husband was lighting his cigar. 'I hope that will fall in with your plans.'

'Fall in with my plans!' He flung the match away and stared at her. 'It is totally outside my plans.' Seeing no encouragement in his wife's face he turned to Laura and Roger. 'Can't you do something to bring your sister to her senses?'

'I don't see why you should object so, Father,' said Laura.

'Nor I,' said Roger. 'Why not do everything you can to make Adelaide's happiness complete instead of trying to spoil it?'

'Because I'm looking ahead; I don't want to see her ruin her life,' Dr. Kendall responded sharply. 'I want to see her marry a young man of some stability, background, assured position — some one doing constructive work and earning a reasonable income. This young fellow — let him prove himself before he marries my daughter. For her to rush into matrimony with an untried, unknown youngster — it's preposterous. We all of us must do everything we can to restrain her.'

'I'm satisfied that she's made a wise choice,' replied Mrs.

Kendall. 'And I sympathize with her wish to get married soon. There isn't much time to make our preparations for the seventeenth. I'm going to see about the invitations tomorrow; I first wanted to make sure that you would be free to perform the ceremony on that day, Damon.'

'I certainly will not perform the ceremony on that day or any other.'

'Father!' cried Laura imploringly.

Roger, more indignant, said, 'What will you do on that day then?'

'If she persists — and you all abet her — I shall absent myself. I shall not countenance any such folly.'

'It will excite a good deal of comment if you aren't at least present at Adelaide's wedding,' remarked Mrs. Kendall. 'In fact, if some one else than you performs the ceremony in Saint Paul's.'

'She needn't be married in Saint Paul's. As for my absence you can explain it as you choose.'

'Of course she will be married in Saint Paul's. At noon on the seventeenth, Damon. We will have a wedding breakfast here for her afterwards. If you refuse to perform the ceremony, she means to ask Mr. Hoyt.'

'Very well then; she has already decided to go over my head.'

'Don't be perverse, Damon. She wants to be married by you. But you have talked to her and to Francis in such a way as to compel them to think of the necessity of perhaps getting some one else.'

'I am not compelling them to do anything. I hope that Adelaide will come to her senses. And I beg of you to reconsider this plan of yours to get out invitations at once.'

'Since she has decided on the seventeenth, it's necessary to get them out at once.'

'If you would all support me and join with me in protesting, her determination would undoubtedly be shaken.'

'But we none of us sympathize with your attitude,' said Mrs. Kendall. 'Do we, Roger?'

'I do think, Father, you're being rather unreasonable,' Roger said. 'So long as Adelaide herself doesn't object to marrying a poor man I don't see why the rest of us should feel stirred up about it.'

'No,' said Laura. 'She loves him and that's all that matters.'

'Love based on a two days' acquaintance is not very deep-rooted,' replied Dr. Kendall. 'When two persons rush into an engagement with each other, there's all the greater reason for them not to rush into marriage. I should think you would realize that, Mary.'

'Ordinarily I might. And I think that Adelaide might have been willing to delay for a while — except for your utterly intractable attitude. She feels now she must marry to escape from you — and I can quite understand her feeling.'

For a moment there was silence. Laura looked from her mother to her father with frightened eyes; Roger, feeling intense discomfort, looked at neither of them. Mrs. Kendall's demeanor was calm, as her voice had been quiet, but her husband reddened angrily.

He opened the evening newspaper with a violent slapping and crackling, and withdrew behind its sheets.

Mrs. Kendall took up a book and began to read. Roger and Laura sat in gloomy silence. Suddenly their mother rose and went over to her husband; she put her hand on his shoulder, but he did not raise his eyes.

'Damon,' she said, 'that was a hateful remark of mine. I'm sorry for it. Aren't you a little sorry, too?'

'I'm not aware of anything to be sorry for,' he replied coldly.

'I wonder,' said Mrs. Kendall, 'if you're really going to be as stubborn as this for the next four weeks? Or will you relent — just a little — at the end?'

'You ought to know me well enough to realize that with

Adelaide's whole future happiness involved, I shan't change my mind.'

'We can't any of us read the future, Damon. Can't you make a concession for her present happiness?'

'No. It's for her to concede something to my wishes.'

'Have you thought how people will talk if you fail to perform the ceremony or be present at it? You will be criticized.'

'I'm not much disturbed by criticism. The fear of it can't turn me from a proper course of action.'

'How you can think it's proper!' Roger exclaimed. 'It doesn't seem as if you could care anything about Adelaide, to be willing to treat her so.'

'If you ever have a child of your own, Roger, you will find it's quite possible to care for it without giving your sanction and approval to its foolish acts.'

Mrs. Kendall walked away from her husband's chair. 'It's of no use to discuss the subject any further, Roger,' she said. 'All that we can do is to go ahead and help Adelaide with her plans.'

In the days that followed, Dr. Kendall isolated himself as much as possible from the members of his family. When Francis made his appearance at the dinner table, as he sometimes did, Dr. Kendall was formally polite, but preserved an austere silence. On the first Sunday after the announcement of the engagement, he preached from the text — Hebrews, 12, 9 — 'Furthermore, we had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence.' The fact that the pew reserved for members of his family was unoccupied that morning — a thing that had not happened before since he had become rector of Saint Paul's — did not diminish the feeling with which he discoursed upon the lack of reverence so prevalent among the younger generation, the insolence and rebelliousness that American youth everywhere — daughters and sons alike — were in the habit of exhibiting to their parents. After the service one of the vestrymen ventured to

rally him upon the nature of the sermon. 'Quite different from the one you gave us last Sunday, in praise of our young men. Afraid, were you, that you'd turned the heads of some of them?' Dr. Kendall accepted the suggestion. 'It's usually wise to follow a word of praise with a word of criticism.' He was, however, uncomfortably aware that for some reason the sermon, eloquent though he felt it had been, had failed to please the congregation — that people were contrasting the tone of it unfavorably with that of his sermon of the preceding Sunday.

Arriving at his house after the service, he found the younger members of his family seated on the veranda, laughing and chatting with Francis Brent — giving in short a perfect illustration of the insolence and rebelliousness of youth.

Adelaide called to him cheerfully. 'You'll be glad to know, Father, that there's to be a dinner given for us every night this week. And Aunt Harriet's giving a dinner for us on Thursday. She asked me to name the people I should like to have invited. So Francis will meet there all the men I wanted to marry and couldn't and all those that wanted to marry me and couldn't. And I shan't tell him which are which.'

'Your Aunt Harriet is a very good-natured, kind-hearted woman,' was Dr. Kendall's stiff reply, and he stalked across the veranda and into the house.

To Dr. Kendall it was a source of astonishment that the members of his family could maintain consistently high spirits in the situation that had arisen. They showed no concern over the painful rift in the domestic harmony, no sympathy for his solitary and unhappy state; such levity and disrespect indicated a heartlessness that he would never have attributed to his children — certainly never to Laura. Yet she as much as her brother and her sister ignored his somber disapproval and his acidulous utterances, and in fact even went beyond the others in treating his aloofness as merely the expression of a temporary insanity, which was certain to pass

off before the wedding day. The adoption of this attitude exasperated him as much as did the realization, not long delayed, that he was fighting a losing battle, so far as his hope to prevent the marriage was concerned. Adelaide's friends and relatives all seemed ready to encourage her in her madness; after a few days it became evident to Dr. Kendall that no one would join him in raising a monitory voice, and that Adelaide's ears were closed to his own most vibrant tones. But he was determined never to admit defeat by surrender. So when his wife, with every appearance of expecting him to share her satisfaction, showed him one of the engraved invitations, he replied sardonically that he had never authorized her to put his name to it and that he would have no part in receiving the guests.

'Father dear,' said Adelaide, 'why don't you insert an advertisement in the newspapers saying you will not be responsible for any debts incurred by your wife in connection with your daughter's marriage? Then people would know that your name had appeared on the invitation by mistake.'

'Never mind if they tease you, Father,' said Laura, venturing to sit on the arm of his chair and pet him. 'I know what it is to feel grumpy. But it will pass off, and probably in a day or two whenever the doorbell rings and a new wedding present arrives, you'll be just as excited and pleased as the rest of us.'

'Who puts you up to this kind of nonsense?' Dr. Kendall grasped the arms of the big chair and fairly hurled himself out of it in his sudden fury. 'Is it your mother? Who is it that instigates both you girls in your attitude of studied contempt towards your father? It is something altogether new on your part, Laura.'

'Oh, Father dear, I'm sorry if I've said anything to get you so stirred up,' said Laura; she came to him coaxingly and took his arm and looked at him with her dark eyes beseeching and remorseful. 'Of course, Mother had nothing to do with it; it's just my own bad teasing nature. And having a wedding in

the house probably has gone to my head; for it is exciting to a girl, you know, the dressmaking, and the presents, and the gayety — and it would really be so nice if only you could enter in!'

'Well, I can't,' he said curtly. 'And let's have an end of all this nonsense of pretending that I'm going to.'

Mrs. Kendall looked up from the linen that she was embroidering.

'What fiction are we to use to account for your absence from the wedding, Damon?'

'You can account for it in any way you like.'

'A nervous breakdown — complete rest and quiet found to be necessary — that really would be rather plausible. Would you be willing to enter a sanitarium for a few weeks in order to make the alibi perfect?'

He gaped at her. 'A sanitarium? I enter a sanitarium?'

'Yes. So that there will be no harsh criticism of you. If you were to go into one at any time now before the wedding and remain there for two or three weeks after it — '

'Do you insinuate that I'm losing my mind?'

'I don't know whether you are or not. I never heard of a father who refused to be present at his daughter's wedding simply because she was marrying a young man who worked on a newspaper.'

'My sanity is unlikely to be questioned by any one outside this room.'

'It might be the surest way to escape terrific criticism.'

'I have told you before that I am not to be deterred by dread of criticism.'

'Everywhere that Francis goes people like him. There's nothing discreditable in his record. Your parishioners will have no sympathy with you whatever.'

'I am not disturbed about that. Any one who comes to me with a question shall have a clear statement of the facts. My daughter becomes infatuated with a youth after a two days'

acquaintance. He is untried, inexperienced, in the apprentice stage. I decline to participate in the celebration of what I regard as a tragedy.'

'As you please,' said Mrs. Kendall. 'Roger has seen Mr. Hoyt, who felt at first that he should not agree to officiate unless you asked him to do so. But when Roger told him of your attitude, he consented — reluctantly. He said that he hoped you would yet find it possible to perform the ceremony.'

'Since you're determined to go ahead, you can go ahead with Hoyt,' said Dr. Kendall.

'Well,' said Adelaide philosophically, 'we shall miss you at the wedding, Father, but we shall try not to miss you too much.'

Dr. Kendall's irreconcilable attitude did not remain a secret within the family. He was indeed incapable of dissembling his feelings; he even intimated to two or three friends the manner in which he proposed to express his disapproval of the match. Finally his sister Harriet begged him to deny entertaining any such intention as that which was being attributed to him and which was setting the entire neighborhood and parish agog; when he confirmed the incredible report, she upbraided him for his cruelty; she told him he would turn every member of his congregation against him; not even his wife had been more plain and blunt of speech.

'You've always been incurably romantic, Harriet,' Dr. Kendall reminded her. 'The scent of orange blossoms exercises a power over you not unlike, I imagine, that of hashish over the Oriental. — Seeing things — seeing things —!' He waved his hands vaguely, disdainfully.

His sister took her departure affronted, indignant, and also deeply grieved. Intellectually and morally she had always looked up to her brother; she had taken an innocent pride in the fact that nearly all the people whom she knew looked up to him just as she did. Her heart was torn both on behalf of Adelaide for the unkind treatment to which her father sub-

jected her in her time of happiness, and on his behalf for the damage that was certain to result to his influence and reputation.

Perhaps she need not have spared much sympathy for Adelaide. The girl was happy in her love and her lover; she was busy with preparations to furnish the attractive little apartment that they had taken on Reservoir Heights; she was gay with her friends and the members of her family because Francis had at once endeared himself to them all — to every one but her father. And Adelaide who had not been, like her Aunt Harriet, in the habit of looking up to her father intellectually and morally, had no intention of letting what she disparagingly regarded as his display of crabbedness spoil her enjoyment of a time when every one else in the world was kinder, sweeter, gentler to her than ever before.

One day she was called to the telephone to hear her Uncle Robert's voice.

'Going to be at home late this afternoon, Adelaide? — Good. Then I'll stop in and see you on my way up from the office.'

What, she wondered, could her Uncle Robert, who had never before honored her with a special visit, be wanting to say to her? It must be something important; otherwise he would surely not have telephoned in order to make an appointment.

She had tea ready for him on the veranda when he arrived; he sat there with her and smoked a cigarette and was as taciturn as usual. After a while he rose and walked along the veranda, stopping at two or three points to look out over the lawn or to lift his eyes to one of the oaks near the house.

'Pretty place,' he said, finally, when he had returned and stood near Adelaide. 'All the comforts of home here, too. Wonder if you won't be missing them after a while, Adelaide.'

'Goodness!' she thought, 'am I going to have Uncle Robert as well as Father against me?' But she said cheerfully, 'I

don't think so, Uncle Robert. We'll have a nice little apartment and enough of the comforts of home to satisfy us.'

'Natural for you to be sanguine.' Mr. Markham stood meditating, his gaze straying in an abstracted manner from his niece's face down to her hands that rested in her lap. He stooped, lifted her left hand, and silently examined the tiny diamond of her engagement ring.

'Looks as if he meant to live within his means,' he said at last, as he relinquished the hand; and Adelaide could not be sure whether the comment was intended to be approving or sardonic. 'Getting lots of pretty things, are you?'

'Yes; people have been so nice! Should you like to see the presents?'

'Yes, I'll look them over.'

She led him upstairs and into the room where the wedding presents were set out — china on one table, silver on another, glassware on a third, mirrors, pictures, and pieces of furniture placed against the walls. She pointed out to him the gifts of those persons in whom she knew he was interested; he walked about the room with his hands behind his back, looked at everything carefully, and made only such comments as 'Handsome, very' or 'Fine thing, that.'

When he had completed his examination he thanked her and said abruptly, 'If your father's at home I want to see him for a moment.'

'He came in a little while before you arrived,' said Adelaide. 'I think you'll find him in his study.'

As she accompanied her uncle down the stairs she wondered more than ever why he had thought it worth while to make an appointment for such a purposeless call. Turning toward the door of her father's study, he paused and said,

'By the way, Adelaide, your Aunt Harriet and I decided you'd probably have enough pretty things without our contributing — and from the display upstairs I guess you have. I hope you won't mind if we don't give you a regular wedding

present.' He drew out his pocketbook and took from it a check. 'We've clubbed together, and you're to use this for anything you want after you're married, you and Francis.'

He passed the check to her.

'Oh, Uncle Robert!' Her voice was startled, but her eyes shone. 'Why, it's for more than Francis makes in a year!'

Her uncle gave a dry little laugh. 'I thought it would be. You'll have all the more need of it.'

'You're a dear — you and Aunt Harriet both! You always were — both of you!' Adelaide, starry-eyed, clasped her uncle's face in her hands and kissed him three times with enthusiasm.

He drew away from her embarrassed and said, 'I guess now I'll go in and see your father.'

He found his brother-in-law at his desk.

'Thought I'd drop in and see Adelaide's wedding presents. Beautiful things she's been getting.' He sat down opposite Dr. Kendall. 'Seen them, have you, Damon?'

'Oh, I've glanced into the room where they are.'

'You know, you ought to take more interest, you really ought.' Robert Markham knitted his brows and shook his head at his brother-in-law. 'I don't as a rule offer advice or suggestions to a man about his private or family affairs, but I've got to make an exception in your favor, Damon.'

Dr. Kendall's jaw assumed a pugnacious expression.

'I'll ask you to stop right there, Robert.'

'It's a matter of a very few words. I'm by way of knowing what public opinion is in this community on various subjects, and it's an absolute certainty, Damon, that if you carry out your threat of staying away from Adelaide's wedding, you'll have no more chance of ever becoming bishop of this diocese than I have.' He rose abruptly and went to the door; there he turned to add, 'Think it over, Damon.'

For some time after his brother-in-law had left the room, Dr. Kendall sat at his desk without making any effort to read or write.

XI

On the morning of the wedding day, a bright June morning with spider-webs glistening on the grass and the leaves of trees and shrubs rimmed with the sparkling dew, Adelaide and Laura came down to breakfast arrayed in riding clothes.

'Aren't we lucky to have such a gorgeous day!' cried Adelaide, and she went quickly round the table, kissing first her mother, then Roger, then her father. 'Even you are glad it's a nice day, aren't you, Father?' she said as she took her seat.

'Oh, I suppose so,' he admitted grudgingly. 'Better day, I think, for horseback riding than for getting married.'

'A very good day for both. Laura and I thought we'd have one last ride together.'

'Goodness, Adelaide, don't put it that way,' said Laura. 'It sounds too ominous.'

'I'm glad to have you get out of the house and stay away until you're needed,' remarked Mrs. Kendall. 'I don't approve of brides hanging round and trying to oversee things on their wedding morning.'

'But be sure that you get her home in time, Laura,' said Roger.

'Not later than half past ten,' added Mrs. Kendall.

It was in fact a few minutes after that hour when the two girls walked their horses up the driveway. Already a score or more of little tables had been set out under the trees; a carpet had been laid down the steps of the veranda, and an awning was being erected; a white marquee had been raised at the farther side of the lawn. Mrs. Kendall met Adelaide at the door and gave her scant time to exclaim over the beauty of the flowers that brightened hall and drawing-room; she said to her, 'Of course, Adelaide, you haven't the slightest idea, I suppose, where your father is to be found?'

'No. Isn't he here?'

'I've been looking for him everywhere. Roger went to the parish house, thinking he might be there. It's my fault; I never thought to get the keys to the wine cellar from him before he disappeared. I intended to have a punch made, but it will have to be a dry party.'

'But Father will surely be here when I start for the church, Mother.'

'I hope so, but I wouldn't count on it, if I were you.'

'He couldn't — he couldn't —' Adelaide's voice choked for a moment — 'let me go without saying good-bye!'

Her mother put her arm round her and kissed her. 'Come and make yourself ready, dearie,' she said.

An hour later Adelaide, in white satin and lace and bridal veil, descended the stairs. Roger, waiting for her in the hall, greeted her with enthusiasm.

'You're the handsomest thing I ever saw, Adelaide. You are, honestly.'

She beamed at him. 'Do you really like my looks?'

'I'll never see anything so good looking again until I look on my own bride — whenever and whoever that may be.'

'I'm pleased enough at having such a perfect specimen of manhood to give me away. I suppose Father hasn't put in an appearance?'

Roger shook his head; he noted the look of distress in her eyes.

'We don't need to start just yet, do we? I want to wait till the very last minute, on the chance that Father will come — just to say good-bye.'

Mrs. Kendall came down, dressed in gray, wearing a black hat with a white plume; her eyes sparkled as she looked at Adelaide.

'It's a perfectly lovely dress, isn't it?' she said. 'And the veil — your hair — yes, everything is just perfect! Laura looks so pretty too; see, here she is.'

Laura in yellow, with a bouquet of yellow roses and a hat garlanded in blue and yellow, stood beside her sister; the brunette and the blonde, each seemed to gain in distinction and beauty by contrast with the other.

'All ready, Adelaide dear?' said Laura. 'It's five minutes of the hour.'

'Let's give Father a minute more,' begged Adelaide. 'I didn't really think he'd be so unkind.' But when the minute had passed she said, 'I don't want any of you ever to let him know that I cared in the least. — Help me with my train, will you, Laura, when I get into the car?'

A few moments later the bridal party was assembled in the vestibule of Saint Paul's; the procession of the ushers formed; Laura took her place in front of her brother and sister; Adelaide stood beside Roger, her hand lightly touching his arm. The soft notes from the organ ceased, the doors were flung wide, the opening bars of the bridal march from 'Lohengrin' pealed out, and the procession moved down the aisle.

Adelaide looked neither to the right nor to the left, unmindful of the turning of heads as she slowly passed. But suddenly her eyes shone and a happy smile came to her lips; she pressed her brother's arm excitedly and seemed to be signalling a message to him — so some of the spectators who were watching her closely thought. And Roger glanced round at her and smiled and nodded in reply; those who noticed the interchange wondered what it was all about. They none of them suspected that it was occasioned by the not very remarkable fact that for the solemnization of this marriage two clergymen were advancing side by side to the chancel steps and that one of them was Dr. Kendall.

The radiance in Adelaide's face seemed to grow as she proceeded toward the chancel. It flashed a glory over the young man waiting for her there and rapt him away from the consciousness of multitudes and eyes and whisperings. He

could not know, he would never know, that not all that radiance of expression had been called forth by the sight and thought of him.

He took his place beside Adelaide, who stood now directly before her father, smiling up at him while he smiled affectionately down at her. It was Mr. Hoyt who began,

'Dearly beloved, we are gathered here together in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony.'

But it was Dr. Kendall who at the end of the preliminary formality said in his gentlest voice, 'Francis, wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony?' It was Dr. Kendall who led first Francis and then Adelaide in the utterance of their vows, who received the ring and gave it to Francis, who joined his right hand to Adelaide's, who pronounced them man and wife.

Dr. Kendall, by expeditious work, was able to meet his wife at the door of the church. He got into the car with her and Laura and Roger, and then Mrs. Kendall said,

'I'm so glad, Damon, you relented at last.'

'I felt,' he replied, 'it was my duty to use all the pressure I could up to the last minute — and then it seemed to be my duty to give Adelaide my support.'

Mrs. Kendall looked at him with a faint smile and an expression of understanding in her eyes.

After he entered the house he received a warmer acknowledgment of his magnanimity from Adelaide. She and Francis were standing together in the bay window of the drawing-room, ready to receive their guests. She cried, 'Oh, Father dear, you've made this day perfect for me,' and embraced him and kissed him. 'It gave me such a thrill seeing you as I came down the aisle! Were you planning that surprise for me all along?'

'No,' he admitted. 'But I decided that since you were

bent on doing this I'd better see it through with you.' He turned to Francis and shook his hand. 'We've got to make a fresh start with each other,' he said.

'I shall be glad to have another chance,' Francis replied.

Dr. Kendall turned then to greet the first of the arriving guests — the father and mother and sister of the groom. His cordiality now left nothing to be desired; as he turned from one person to another, laughing, chatting gayly, shaking hands with a hearty warmth of greeting, no one of all those who observed him with interest could doubt that either the rumors of his displeasure over the match had been grossly exaggerated or that he had become entirely reconciled to his daughter's choice.

Mrs. Kendall got his ear for a moment to say to him, 'Damon, isn't there something in the wine cellar?'

'Bless my soul!' he exclaimed. 'What a frightful oversight!'

He grasped Roger by the shoulder and hurried him away unceremoniously from the young woman to whom he was talking. Upon learning the urgency of the matter, Roger volunteered to relieve his father of all responsibility. Dr. Kendall turned the key over to him; Roger enlisted Leonard Warder to aid him in compounding a proper punch. For Leonard there was no more congenial task; he thanked Roger for the friendly thought and assured him that he could have suggested nothing else so likely to purge his mind of the melancholy that weighed it down.

Consequently, some time later, when the guests were seated at the tables on the lawn or were strolling about under the trees, there was a center of attraction in the library to which the gentlemen from time to time repaired. And it was there that Dr. Kendall at last came face to face with his brother-in-law, Robert Markham, whom he had hitherto succeeded in evading.

'A glass of punch with you, Robert,' said Dr. Kendall formally.

'Thank you, Damon.'

Dr. Kendall ladled out a glass for his brother-in-law, a glass for himself. There were other thirsty guests waiting near the punch bowl; the two men withdrew with their glasses to a corner of the room. Robert Markham cleared his throat and looked at his brother-in-law with quizzical eyes.

'Your health, Bishop,' he said, raising his glass.

Dr. Kendall solemnly raised his.

'Here's to you, Senator,' he answered.

XII

PUNCTUAL for her first appointment with her lawyer and man of business, Isabel Ashton entered the doorway of the tall office building at five minutes of three. She left the elevator at the twelfth floor, and walked leisurely down the long corridor. Despite the significant black of her hat and dress, her face looked eager and animated. A man who passed her in the corridor turned an interested glance upon her, attracted by the smart cut of her clothes, the proud carriage of her head, and the pleasant expression in her eyes.

She opened the door of Roger's office and entered with some diffidence. Roger came at once to welcome her; he led her into his private room.

As he made the papers ready for her to sign, he said,

'I hope it wasn't a great trouble to you to come down here. As I think I told you, I could have arranged to do all this at your house.'

'No,' she answered, 'I wanted to come here. I am at home so much; it does me good to get out occasionally and see new sights. This is a very nice office, isn't it? And up so high! I am sure that all lawyers who have such a wide view from their office windows must grow to be very high-minded!'

He laughed. 'I guess the elevation of a man's mind isn't always determined by the number of stories he's up in the air.'

'No; I should have gone to you just the same even if your office had been on the ground floor.' She stood looking out of the window for a moment. 'How far you can see up and down the river! And way out over the West End.'

'Yes; it's a little too apt to invite idle musing, having such a wide and attractive view. It's so easy just to sit and look and think of all the strange things that must be going on

right within the radius that your eye covers — it looks so humdrum and quiet, and yet somewhere no doubt a murder is being planned, a train of events is leading up to a suicide, the wrong people are becoming engaged or married to each other, a poor man has become suddenly rich and a rich man has become unexpectedly poor, people are dying and babies are being born, but the scene is always peaceful and humdrum and never gives a sign.'

'Yes,' she said. 'But I think it's more remarkable that the people themselves wouldn't give a sign if you passed them in the street. The man who's going to kill his wife next week and the man who's going to shoot himself to-morrow — I suppose we might pass them both this afternoon and never notice anything strange about them. So if your office was on the ground floor you'd probably find just as much to muse about in the faces of the people going by on the sidewalk as you do in the view of the houses from twelve stories up.'

'I see you're convinced I should have my idle moments no matter where I was. I'm afraid you're right.'

'But I mustn't force them on you,' she said, quickly coming over to the desk. 'And after I've signed my name wherever it's necessary, there is something I want very much to talk over with you — so I mustn't waste your time now.'

She proceeded diligently to affix her flowing signature to the various papers. When she had finished she said,

'I have been thinking that I should like to do something by way of a memorial to Jim — something that should always bear his name. But so far I haven't been able to decide on anything that satisfies me. I wish you would consider it and give me any suggestion that occurs to you. At your leisure, of course.'

'Have you any special type of memorial in mind?' asked Roger. 'I mean, have you any preference for an educational foundation of some sort, or for a memorial gift to some

charitable institution, or for a gift to some religious organization — is there any kind of memorial that appeals to you more than another?'

'No, except that I don't think it should be anything of a religious character; Jim wasn't a very religious person, and I should like it to be the kind of thing that he would approve — a thing that would be suitable and in keeping for him. And I should want it to be a memorial of some importance; I mean — I feel I can afford it — I had the sum of five hundred thousand dollars in mind.'

'Yes,' said Roger slowly. 'I suppose you can afford to give that amount. You could build a hospital; you could give a building to Jim's old school or to his college; you could create a whole flock of scholarships and fellowships; you could establish a foundation for some special sort of scientific or sociological research. Any one of them, I should think, would be a worthy memorial.'

'And yet I have a feeling that in none of them would Jim himself be very much interested. I should like to have the memorial a thing that he would be enthusiastic about himself. Of course a hospital — he wouldn't disapprove of that, but he was always so full of vigor and health that he — well, he never acquired any personal feeling for hospitals. And as for gifts to his school and his college — he didn't graduate at either of them, you know, and I think he had no warm affection for them as institutions, fond though he was of the friends that he made there. He was so little of a student that to establish scholarships or a research foundation in his name would be likely to strike him as almost funny. The thing he was most interested in always was sport — and somehow sport doesn't lend itself very well to a memorial, does it?'

'Playing fields for children — and for grown-ups,' suggested Roger. 'That would be a perfectly good kind of memorial.'

Her eyes sparkled responsively. 'I hadn't thought of that; I wonder if it wouldn't be just the thing!' she exclaimed. 'I was sure you would have some splendid suggestions!'

'In a city there can never be too many playgrounds; here there are certainly too few. Unfortunately manufacturing has taken possession of the river banks, where the playgrounds ought to be.'

'It's quite a thrilling idea; I feel impatient already to tour about the streets and see what could be done. Will you come with me some time soon? And perhaps when we get a plan worked out, you'll take me to see the mayor or whoever the proper person is, and help me in making the arrangements.'

'Yes, of course. But you may think of something better. Half a million dollars is a good deal of money, you know; don't be too impulsive in deciding how you're to spend it.'

'I suppose I seem very childish about it,' she said. 'But I shall try not to be too precipitate. Mr. Hoyt is coming to see me this afternoon; I will ask him what he thinks. Perhaps he will have some other suggestion.'

'Perhaps.' Roger looked away from her and asked casually, 'Have you had any talk with him yet?'

'No, and I think that even though you gave him my message he would never have come to see me if I hadn't sent for him.'

'He's very much occupied of course with his parish work.'

'It doesn't seem as if that were the reason. I wonder if he finds it really too painful to go and see women whose husbands were killed — with his own loss so recent. I'm sorry if I'm making him come when he shrinks from it, but I've felt ever since you told me about him — about his experience — psychic, would you call it? — that I must talk with him — that he could help me. So finally I wrote, and I had a very nice note in reply, and he's coming to see me at five o'clock.'

'You mustn't feel too hopeful that he can help you to have any psychic communication or experience. I know that he would like to help you if he could.'

'I've heard him preach twice — the last two Sundays. I don't know how to describe it, but it was as if a current of faith flowed from him into me — into every one there. And I don't know that it was because he said anything very novel or striking, anything that you mightn't have heard in any church. No, it was something about him — some power that he has of giving out to people. Everybody in his church feels it; I could tell. I've never seen such attention, such absorption. So I'm quite excited at the prospect of having him for a while all to myself.'

'He has that power you describe; I've felt it,' said Roger. 'It's been intensified by his war experience and his personal loss.' He paused and then added slowly, 'It's projected him so far already into the other world that from my point of view it's made him a little heedless or indifferent to adjustments in this life.'

Isabel looked at him, puzzled. 'I don't understand what you mean.'

'No — well, it's of no importance. I will put my mind on the subject of playgrounds, and I'll try to draw up a plan for you — just by way of having something concrete to work from.'

'You are the most splendid help!' she cried enthusiastically. 'Jim was such a good judge of men! He couldn't have named any one who would be a better adviser for me than you are; I know that already.'

He smiled. 'I'd rather not have you quite so sanguine so early; I'd rather hear you say that two years from now.'

'You will,' she assured him merrily as she rose. 'I suppose taking care of other people's property so much has made you very cautious and conservative about everything — even about yourself. But you really are going to be a splendid

adviser; I know it if you don't. — Will you let me come in and talk with you again soon, when I've thought a little more about the playground idea?'

'Indeed I hope you'll come in — or send for me — whenever you have anything that you want to discuss.'

'I shall be going away next week for the summer, and I should like to get a plan sketched out before I leave — so that when I come back in the fall we can go right to work on it. So you will hear from me soon.' She started towards the door, Roger accompanying her, but stopped suddenly to say, 'How wrapped up in my own affairs I've been not to have said a word about Adelaide's wedding! I never saw a lovelier bride or one who looked more radiantly happy. And I liked the appearance of the young man.'

'Yes, he's a good fellow. Even Father, who felt at first that they were altogether too hasty, rushing into matrimony, is now quite reconciled.'

'It was a very speedy affair, wasn't it? That made me all the more sympathetic and interested. Jim and I had known each other only a short time before we were married.'

'Yes, I remember.' Roger added after a moment of awkward silence, 'They've taken an apartment, as you probably know, at 27 Reservoir Heights. They expect to be there right through the summer.'

'I suppose they're not back yet from their wedding trip.'

'They arrive to-morrow. It would please Adelaide very much if you would go to see her sometime before you leave.'

'I shall try to do that. You know, I've always been very fond of Adelaide — and a little afraid of her. Perhaps because she never seemed quite happy; one is never afraid of people who seem happy, do you think so? But she looked so radiant on her wedding day — and I'm sure now I shall never feel afraid of her any more!'

'She doesn't mean to strike fear into people. She's really a kind-hearted girl.'

'So we all are!' Isabel smiled, shook hands with him, and a moment later was tripping down the corridor, her mind eagerly intent on the meeting that she was soon to have with Mr. Hoyt. She had a conviction that he would do something quite magical for her, that on this day he would bring into her life a comforting and inspiring influence — perhaps even initiate her into the mystery by which he himself, a sufferer like her, had gained a new assurance and faith. And she thought how happily Roger's suggestion of a memorial gift of playing fields for poor children had come upon a day that might prove filled for her with consolation and hope.

Meanwhile, Roger carefully filed the papers that she had signed and placed them in his vault. Then he stood at his window musing on one of the strange ironical episodes soon to take place in the radius covered by his eye — a clergyman destroying a woman's affection for the dead and causing her to abandon a plan that would have benefited the living.

XIII

In her drawing-room Isabel awaited the coming of the clergyman. She had taken the photograph of Jim Ashton from the mantelpiece and placed it on the table beside which she sat; and because she clung to the hope that through Mr. Hoyt she might have some mystical revelation, some spiritual communion with her dead husband, she had been trying to create the most favorable mental atmosphere — gazing at his picture and letting her mind turn to episodes of their life together — the evening of the dance at the Country Club, when he had first made love to her, when with a joyous and excited recklessness she had slipped away from the ballroom and sat outside with him in his car, letting him hold her in his arms and fill her ears with words of adoration; the wedding day, and the smiling faces of her friends turned toward her while she walked down the aisle of the church with the man who had just become her husband; her own swelling emotions of that brief passage, her happiness and pride; the day when he bent over her, anxious and loving, a few minutes before their child was born; and one scene from the later years, the last, their last night together, the embrace at parting.

She heard the front door open; she was on her feet when Hoyt entered the room, and she advanced eagerly to welcome him. She had seen him only twice before, and on those occasions his priestly vestments had given him an austerity not out of keeping with the picture of him that she had formed in her mind. But now this slight man, of something less than average height, in a wrinkled black clerical suit, seemed in no respect to fulfill to the outward eye one's reasonable conception of a war hero. Until, as he took her hand, his eyes seemed to flash piercingly into hers; and suddenly from that look and the momentary pressure of his hand and the quiet

tone of his voice uttering a simple greeting there seemed to flow into her that electric current of confidence and inspiration, of serenity and happiness, that she had received while she had sat and watched him and heard him speak in his church.

'I thought it would be pleasant if we had tea in the garden,' she said.

She led him into an adjoining room and thence to the lawn. They passed through an opening in a tall hedge of arbor vitæ and entered a spacious formal garden laid out in three terraces; at the lower end was a tiled pavilion in which were chairs and tables. At the upper end hollyhocks stood against a wall behind which was a row of cedars; in the center of the middle terrace was a fountain, with four marble statues of dancing maidens placed about it; irises and larkspurs and lilies mingled their colors, and bees and humming birds darted and poised among the blossoms.

'How lovely it all is!' Hoyt exclaimed. 'I know almost nothing about flowers — but it's beautiful!'

'Most of what I know about them I have learned since I have lived here,' she said. While they walked slowly along the paths she explained that her husband's father had died shortly after her marriage and that her mother-in-law had been unwilling after his death to continue living in the house that had been for so many years her home. 'It seemed as if, after that, she wanted to contract — draw the walls closer about her — draw more and more inside herself,' said Isabel. 'This big place was a burden to her. I can understand her feeling. I have had it too. But my husband wanted to keep the place up and hand it down in the family, and so we lived here. Then, as he didn't himself have any very keen interest in gardens, it fell to me to study about them and fit myself as well as I could to supervise the care of the place. I wondered if I was justified in maintaining it during the war — but the gardener and his two helpers are elderly men and

I really think they wouldn't have been very effective doing anything else.'

'Beauty justifies itself, even in war time,' said Hoyt.

'And then I felt it was a satisfaction probably to my husband to learn from my letters that I was maintaining the place as he had wished. That thought was justification enough for me.'

Hoyt's failure to make any response disappointed her. She was hoping that through her allusion to her husband Hoyt might be led to talk about him, and that then it might be easier for her to open her heart and tell him of her longing.

She tried again. 'Jim was so funny about some things! Except for a very few flowers he never could remember the names, and year after year he would ask me what the snapdragons were, and the stocks and the Canterbury bells. And yet no one had a keener eye for the fine points of a dog or a horse.'

'Different tastes, different talents,' Hoyt remarked briefly.

Then intuition suddenly told her that this man was deliberately avoiding talk about her husband. Why? Personal enmity? Surely, if it had ever existed, it could not rankle now.

A maid appeared with the tea things in the pavilion.

Isabel mounted the steps, Hoyt at her side, and seated herself at the tea-table.

After she had handed him his tea, she said,

'You know, Mr. Hoyt, since I wrote to you asking you to come I've found still another reason besides those I had in mind for wanting your advice. I think perhaps I'll begin with that. — Will you have a cigarette?'

'No, thank you.'

'I was talking with Major Kendall to-day about my wish to establish a memorial of some kind to my husband. I hadn't been able to think of anything that seemed quite suitable; Major Kendall suggested playgrounds for children

— in different parts of the city — where they're most needed. I wondered if you might have any other suggestion.'

'I don't think of any, Mrs. Ashton. Children's playgrounds are needed certainly.'

'And don't you think that they would be more appropriate as a memorial than anything else — from your knowledge of my husband, I mean?'

The look of compassion deepened in his eyes.

'I don't feel qualified, from my knowledge of your husband, to say what form of memorial would be appropriate,' he said gently.

'I hoped that you might have been together occasionally toward the end.'

'We saw very little of each other.'

'Well, then, you can't help me very much in deciding about the memorial, can you?' she said, with a trace of disappointment in her voice. 'I think, though, that I shan't be able to improve on the playground idea.' She paused a moment, obviously ill at ease, fearing to proceed. 'If I may speak of it, Mr. Hoyt, Major Kendall told me of the experience you have had since coming home — the — psychic experience, I mean. It gave me such a longing to have a similar experience. I think of making a trip to France this summer — just a short trip — just, really, to stand by my husband's grave. And I wanted to ask you — next week I'm going to Maine and I felt that I might not have another chance — I wanted to ask you if there's anything that you think I can do — beforehand or at the time itself — to help me to obtain such a result.'

She sat forward, with her elbows resting on the tea-table and her hands clasped against her breast, and looked at him appealingly.

He shook his head. 'Mrs. Ashton, I can't give you any hope; I can't give you any encouragement. I believe that experiences of the sort that you long for are possible only

when the spirit of the dead person and the spirit of the living are perfectly attuned to each other.'

'Why should you think that we are not?' she asked in a low voice.

For a moment he did not reply. 'Did it occur to you,' he said at last, 'that as chaplain of your husband's regiment I should have come to see you, without waiting to be sent for?'

Bewilderment and fright were in her eyes. 'I knew that you had come home to heavy burdens — and a heavy sorrow,' she said. 'I — I had hoped that you might come. But I thought I could understand why it was difficult for you.'

'It was not because I had other duties to perform that I didn't come. It was because I was afraid that if I came a most unwelcome duty would be forced on me.'

'You have been decorated for courage, Mr. Hoyt.' She sat straight now in her chair and looked at him with challenging eyes.

'There are some tasks for which one doesn't volunteer. But when you summoned me —' He left the sentence unfinished; his expression was one of sorrow and compassion.

'I think you had better tell me what is on your mind,' Isabel said coldly. 'Keeping me in suspense can't make your task easier.'

'I knew of course that you wanted to talk with me about your husband. I knew that if you did I should have to tell you the truth about him. You ask what reason I have for thinking that your spirit and his are not in accord. I have to answer, the manner of his life and of his death.'

Isabel's face turned ashen, the challenging light died from her eyes. She gazed horror-stricken at the clergyman and faintly formed the words, 'His — his death?'

'He was not killed in action.'

'Not — not a traitor!'

'No, not that. And yet — it was not an honorable death. He was killed while he was on leave, in a town some distance

behind the lines — a town that he frequently visited. He was killed by a French officer in a fit of jealous fury. The Frenchman is serving a sentence of life imprisonment.'

'He was killed because of a woman?'

'Yes.'

Her eyes filled with tears; she rose abruptly, pushing back her chair. Hoyt rose also.

'No, no; sit down, please,' she entreated; she walked to the farther end of the pavilion and stood there for a few moments with her back to the clergyman, with one arm thrown up across her forehead, the hand tightly clenched. Hoyt remained on his feet, silent, motionless, his gaze fixed on her in pity. When she turned and came toward him, although her eyelashes were wet with tears, a soft amber light shone in her hazel eyes.

'I can forgive him,' she said simply. 'I have forgiven him.'

'Yes, you have forgiven him.' Hoyt bowed his head. 'But forgiveness where there is no cry to be forgiven —!'

'You are cruel to say that. He had no time — no chance!'

'There was the woman's testimony at the trial. She had letters. He intended never to come back — if he lived. He was to let you divorce him, if you would; she expected to marry him.'

Anguish and anger together swept her face; lightning and no soft amber light flashed in her eyes. She stood rigid; tense, her hands clenched at her sides.

'How I hate you for telling me that!' she exclaimed at last in a low voice. 'You a clergyman! How I hate you!'

Hoyt's face blanched, but he did not lower his eyes.

'Yes,' he said. 'I should think you would. I expected that you would. There is nothing more then for me to say.'

He turned and stepped down from the pavilion and walked towards the entrance of the garden.

'Mr. Hoyt!' Her voice sounded a commanding note. 'I don't want you to go — yet.'

He came back gravely and stood before her, facing her accusing, questioning eyes.

'It seems so wanton — what you have done to me!' she said. 'As if I should deliberately sweep all this china off and break it on the tiles — or mow down all these flowers. But you must have had some reason for it — some reason that seemed to you good.'

'The truth, Mrs. Ashton.'

'It would have been no lie if you had told me nothing. — And see what you have done,' she cried suddenly, with the realization breaking upon her. 'Exposing my friends — the two or three who knew and who tried to be merciful — as liars! You kill my faith in every one — not just yourself.'

'No,' he said firmly. 'I have not done that. You can never lose your faith in those friends of yours who you know tried to be merciful.'

'I can't believe it anyway!' she cried. 'You say there were letters; how do you know they weren't forgeries? It can't be true; I had a letter from my husband just before I learned of his death — a letter telling me what I should do if he was killed. He would never have written to me so if he had been writing those other letters.'

'Colonel Davis and Major Kendall examined them. And there was other evidence besides the letters.'

'Major Kendall! Then I can never bear to see him again! Never! Oh!' She paced back and forth, flinging her arms about in wild despair. 'Jim died disgraced and I live disgraced; he was the more fortunate. Yes, oh yes, a hundred times. — And my boy; his father was to have been an inspiration to him as he grew older! What a mockery!'

'Mrs. Ashton, you mustn't feel that you're disgraced. You mustn't let what I've told you affect your attitude towards any living human being —'

'Not even yourself?'

'Oh, yes, myself; you have reason now to hate me and shun me, I admit.'

She looked at him for a moment and her eyes softened.

'I can't understand why with your experience of sorrow you should have chosen to add to mine.'

'My only other choice would have been to answer your questions with evasions. And suppose that ten years from now you learned the truth. There are, of course, many men who know it. Prolonging the illusion intensifies the ultimate bitterness of the disillusion. There is the other point of view, I admit — Major Kendall's — that since there was no certainty the truth would eventually reach you, enlightenment was needless and cruel. If I believed that this life is all and that we had better therefore make what compromises with it we can, I should have agreed with him, and told you nothing. That is not my belief.'

'So far as I am concerned, you have destroyed my interest in a future life. I feel now that this one is enough for me.'

'Any shattering blow to one's faith and love always produces that feeling. But life always gives one a chance to experience again faith and hope and love.'

'Always?' she questioned.

'Well, let us say then if the shattering blow falls while one is still young.'

'Do you feel that you — or I — ought to tell his mother?'

'I think that if she should put you or me in a position where we must either tell her the truth or dishonestly evade it, we should tell her the truth.'

'Mercy has very little place in your Christianity, has it, Mr. Hoyt? And don't we dishonestly evade the truth while we let her continue in ignorance? It would break her heart to be told — but what of that?'

'Perhaps I was wrong in my answer. I had not thought at all of the problem as it relates to her. I have thought about it a great deal as it related to you.'

'But if truth is not after all to be your invariable guide, where are you left, Mr. Hoyt? I don't see that you have any

better right than Major Kendall to decide when to tell the truth and when to suppress it.'

'I haven't claimed any better right, Mrs. Ashton. I don't feel called upon to go about the world telling disagreeable truths to all the people that I see. It may be that I have an imperfect sense of responsibility. But if you had not sent for me and begun to question me in a way that left me no alternative between a truthful answer and one that was essentially false I should not have felt it my duty to enlighten you.'

'Even now I cannot understand why you should not have turned my questions aside — as Major Kendall did when I asked him about my husband's death. The chances are that no one else would ever have been cruel enough to undeceive me. What harm in letting me have my sorrow and my pride?'

'Suppose, Mrs. Ashton, that you had continued in your belief; suppose that you had lived and died looking forward to the reunion with your husband — and had then found that the companionship that he had preferred on earth had determined the sort of companionship that was to be his in the next life.'

'Why then,' she exclaimed, 'I shouldn't have recognized heaven.'

'Oh, yes; there would be other presences to assure you. We can only believe that some adjustment is made to compensate those souls that are disappointed of their dearest expectation, as you would have been of yours. But can any adjustment in the life hereafter fully compensate one for the years lost on earth through nursing an illusion — through dedicating one's self to a devotion that proves a complete mockery? When you gave me the opportunity by your questions to tell you the truth and set you free from a bootless servitude for life, I could not refuse it, Mrs. Ashton.'

'You seem so sure of your theology! And it all seems so utterly unreal to me.'

'Yet it would not have seemed unreal to you if I had said, "Yes, I believe you will have a message from your husband if you go to France and stand by his grave."'

'I should have been in a credulous mood then; now you've made me skeptical and unbelieving.'

'My own faith increases daily.'

'Yes, because you have your heart's desire to look forward to. But you have torn mine away from me.'

'In the hope that you will yet find it.'

'Yes. I suppose you would feel more certainly vindicated, Mr. Hoyt, if the adjustment could be made right here on earth, instead of having to be managed somehow later in heaven.'

'You are saying bitterly exactly what I feel. I stand by it. I believe it. And I know, Mrs. Ashton, that some day you will get your happiness through the same belief.'

'It seems most improbable to me at this moment. And I don't receive much guidance from you, Mr. Hoyt, as to the course I should pursue now in dealing with my mother-in-law and my son. Am I to liberate them, at the earliest opportunity, from the possibility of servitude to a lifelong mockery?'

He was silent for some time, looking off across the garden. And although, while he had looked at her, she had shown him a defiant eye and a cynically curving lip, now that he had turned his gaze elsewhere the expression of her face softened; it had even a hint of compassion for him in the dilemma in which he had apparently been placed.

'I think, Mrs. Ashton, you can't say anything to the mother. What sort of a heaven there may be for the mothers who have unworthy sons — that's a deep mystery. But it can't be many years before she will know, and there's no need to darken her life. With your boy, I believe that eventually you will feel it wise to tell him the truth. When he is growing up, and temptations begin to come to him, the dis-

closure might have a tremendous moral effect; it would put him on his guard, strengthen him to resist anything in his inheritance that might be evil.'

The abstracted look in her eyes told him that she had ceased to listen. He waited a moment and then said,

'I know that you can't help regretting you ever saw me, and that you won't want to see me again. Good-bye, Mrs. Ashton.'

She did not take his hand and then let him depart; instead she walked slowly with him down the steps of the pavilion and along the path toward the house.

'I realize,' she said, 'that it has been hard for you to come and say all this to me, Mr. Hoyt. I don't quite know how I am going to feel. Just now it doesn't seem as if I could ever again face anybody who knows what you know.'

'You shouldn't make the innocent suffer with the guilty.'

'You are all guilty together — you of bringing me bad news, and they of deceiving me because they thought I was too weak to endure bad news.'

'Their motive was good. Try always to remember that.'

'Yes. I shall try always to remember that about you, too, Mr. Hoyt. Good-bye.'

She gave him her hand for a moment's brief pressure, then turned from him and entered the house.

XIV

Roger Kendall received a note from Isabel Ashton saying that she had abandoned her intention of providing a memorial to her husband. She offered no explanation; she could not have conveyed the announcement in fewer words. The very abruptness of the note was an intimation that acknowledgment or reply would be unwelcome. Three days later another note, equally brief, came to him bearing the message that she was leaving that night for Maine and that her address until the end of the summer would be Bar Harbor. The absence of any personal or friendly word in the two communications was, Roger felt, significant of a completely altered attitude toward him. The consciousness of the change depressed his spirits. Often he found himself wishing for a repetition of that visit she had made to his office, for the reappearance there of her bright, animated presence; he thought of her unexpected disclosure of depths of thought and earnestness, charming because so shyly revealed. How much he had begun to care for her he had hardly realized until the evidence reached him of her desire to annihilate all the approaches to her friendship and interest that his professional relation to her had prepared.

Hoyt whom he visited soon after the arrival of the first note had no reassuring message for him. When Roger asked if Mrs. Ashton had given any indication of her attitude toward those who had deceived her, Hoyt admitted that she had expressed a wish never to see any of them again. 'But that isn't to be taken seriously,' he said. 'She was much wrought up at the time. I think it's quite likely that she will never want to see me again. But I'm on a different footing from you and Warder and the Colonel; I'm quite sure I made her understand that your actions had been governed

entirely by consideration for her. Mine I think she attributes to an unreasonable overdeveloped conscience — much less forgivable.' He seemed to have no feeling of contrition even when Roger told him that on account of his exposure of the truth Mrs. Ashton had abandoned the project for a memorial to her husband. 'It's unfortunate that the children aren't to have their playgrounds,' was Hoyt's comment. 'But there are many good causes in the world, and if she withholds her money from one, she will give to another.'

Roger thought that his friend took a somewhat detached view of the upheaval that he had created. He felt quite certain that an increase in grace and spirituality was not always accompanied by any corresponding gain in wisdom.

'And do you think you really gave her anything in place of all you took from her?' he could not refrain from asking.

'Yes — but she doesn't know it.'

Seeing, from the look in Hoyt's eyes, that his thoughts had taken him again into the realm of mysticism, Roger did not question him further.

A few days after Isabel Ashton's departure for the Maine coast, Roger took up his quarters for the summer at the Country Club. His father's house was closed, the family set off on their annual migration to Cape Cod — Dr. Kendall bestowing upon Roger at their parting the key to the wine cellar, while Adelaide, who was present at the transfer, complained at the display of favoritism and demanded a duplicate. Roger tried to pacify her with the assurance that if she would let him know when she was about to give a party he would see that she was supplied with whatever was necessary for the occasion.

'We shall be absolutely dry on the Cape, Adelaide,' Dr. Kendall reminded her. 'Absolutely. No greater hardship is imposed on you than that which we are to suffer during the next three months.'

'I can't think what it will be like there without you, Adelaide,' said Laura. 'I'm sure it will be a horrid summer.'

'Not at all, not at all,' declared Dr. Kendall cheerily. 'You'll have me to play golf with every day, my dear.'

Roger himself had expected to take life easy during the summer months; he had thought that three or four times a week he would leave his office early enough to have a round of golf at the club before dinner, and that he would spend many cheerful evenings playing bridge, or smoking and talking with a congenial group, or visiting the theater — with still leisure enough for the reading of novels and essays and poetry. But scarcely had he settled himself at the club and begun to taste of the anticipated pleasures when he was appointed chairman of a State Commission on the Necessaries of Life, and found himself charged with the duty of collecting information concerning the prices of food and fuel, clothing and shoes, and reporting what action, if any, the State should take in an effort to reduce the high cost of living. Thus many of the diversions that he had expected to enjoy at the Country Club he was obliged to forego for economic investigations in different parts of the State. When he was taking railway journeys or eating solitary meals, Isabel Ashton was often in his thoughts; he wondered whether she would always be unfriendly; he resolved that if after her return in the autumn she insisted on keeping him at a distance he would relinquish the management of her affairs. The occasional business communications that he sent her were as formal as possible; her acknowledgments of them were equally formal; and yet whenever he received a letter from her he opened it with an eager and expectant hope that this time there would be something to indicate a softening of mood. And on the other hand he felt that she bore her wound with courage and dignity; he could imagine how grievous was the wound.

Leonard Warder was one of the summer boarders at the

Country Club; Roger acquainted him one day while they were playing golf together with the fact that Hoyt had enlightened Mrs. Ashton in regard to the manner of her husband's death. 'What the devil did Hoyt want to mess things up for!' Leonard demanded indignantly. Roger explained that a clergyman might have scruples about being a party to a lie, even in the best of causes.

'I lied like a gentleman to her, and so did you,' complained Leonard. 'Hoyt should have been willing to do the same. — Well, I guess she won't long be heartbroken over the discovery, and then she'll forgive us — if she hasn't done it already.'

He teed his ball and made a long straight drive down the fairway. Roger followed with a slice off into the rough. While Leonard tramped in the long grass with him searching for the lost ball, Roger said, 'Why do you think Mrs. Ashton won't long be heartbroken?'

'Why should she be? If it hadn't been for the war, she'd probably have been separated from Jim by this time. As long as she'd been thinking of him as a reformed soul who had been killed in action, she could forget and forgive everything else; but now why should she?'

'Sometimes a woman is constant to the memory of her old ideal even in the face of disillusioning facts,' said Roger.

'Not in these days. Adaptability, not constancy, is the modern virtue. I notice it, even in myself.'

'That seems hardly a reason for generalizing about women.'

'Oh, there's no difference in that respect between the sexes. Constancy has always been as much a masculine attribute as a feminine. But I admit I find I haven't it. I'm adaptable.'

'That's good news. In what way are you adaptable, Leonard?'

'Why, for instance, I've begun to find that Laura is just as attractive as Adelaide if not more so.'

'You keep working on that line, Leonard. You've got hold of a real idea there.'

'I think so. I'm rather looking forward to a visit at the Cape in a couple of weeks. You probably haven't much sympathy with that sort of adaptability, Roger. I have a feeling you're one of the old-fashioned constant kind.'

'You probably do me a grave injustice. — Ah, here I am! Now can I dig it out with the niblick?'

In the satisfaction of extricating himself with a shot that placed him within approaching distance of the hole, Roger did not pursue the subject of self-analysis. Nor would he have been likely ever to return to it in connection with the topic that Leonard had introduced had not an incident that occurred two or three weeks later forced it again upon his attention.

He had been absent on a four days' trip; he arrived late one afternoon at the Country Club and encountered Spencer Winant in the reading-room. He had no particular reason to rejoice at the meeting, but as there happened to be no one else in the room at the moment and he had not seen Winant before since his return from France he greeted him cordially. Winant stood, leaning back against a table, his hands gripping the edge of it, his feet crossed; his postures were always negligent and graceful. Slim, tall, and well made, with light hair that lay sleek and smooth upon his haughtily held head, with finely cut features, and ivory tinted skin, he was a handsome young man, whom Roger had always instinctively disliked; his blue eyes were pale in hue and insolent in expression.

'I saw Sally for a few moments one day,' said Roger. 'Looking very well — as always.'

'Yes, she was well at last accounts.' Winant flicked the ash from his cigarette and regarded Roger with a stare that seemed more than usually cold and insolent. 'You'll probably be interested to know that she and I have separated.'

Taken aback at this abrupt and unexpected announcement Roger hesitated and then said, 'I'm sorry that things haven't gone well with you and her.'

'You ought to be damned glad — at least if you still feel anything like the way you did five years ago. — Come up to my room; I'd like to have a little talk with you. — Just a moment till I get something out of my locker.'

Wondering and curious, Roger waited for him until he returned, with a bottle of whiskey in his hand, followed by a waiter bearing a tray on which were two tall glasses, a siphon of soda water, and a bowl of cracked ice.

When the two were seated in Winant's room and the whiskey and soda had been poured out, Winant raised his glass and with a half-mocking smile said, 'Here's to your luck and success, Kendall.'

'I don't get your meaning,' Roger replied, holding his glass and not raising it to his lips.

'Oh, well, have a drink anyway; never mind my meaning.' Then Roger gravely complied with the request.

'I may as well tell you that it didn't take long for Sally and me to find that we weren't hitting it off any too well together. I needn't enter into any details; you can assume it was pretty much all my fault. Sally's a straight-laced person, and my loose, dissolute ways annoyed her a good deal — quite a good deal.' Winant smiled, as if at a recollection that gave him some rather bitter amusement. 'She finally got the idea — and I admit that it was not entirely unfounded — that she'd married Casanova instead of Sir Galahad. When she made that discovery, our marital relations ceased. There would have been a smash-up then, but it happened just about the time this country entered the war; and she knew I would go and I guess she thought it would be only decent, if I was to be killed, to let me die in good standing — in the odor of sanctity, so to speak. I won't pretend that while I was in the service I led an entirely virtuous and blameless life; at the same time,

the longer I was away, the more I came to look forward to getting back to Sally and trying to make things up with her — not that I'd ever have been a perfectly connubial person, of course, but I quite wanted to have her take me back.'

He poured himself another whiskey and soda and lighted another cigarette. Roger began to feel some sympathy for him as well as interest in his narrative; in spite of his cynical manner, Winant was clearly finding it difficult to continue.

'Well,' he said at last, 'Sally didn't welcome me with open arms. She gave me to understand that as a soldier's wife she had felt it her duty to do what she could to keep up the army's morale by letter-writing and that kind of thing, you know, but now that the war was over and I was home again she couldn't consent to live with me as my wife; my actions had killed whatever feeling she had ever had for me, and there was absolutely no use in my trying to revive it. I told her not to worry — that I could pass my time with more appreciative ladies, that she already had sufficient grounds for divorce, as she knew, and that she would soon have plenty more. Of course, feeling as she does and since there are no children, she's quite right in wanting to get free of me as soon as possible, and she's going to have her divorce quietly, without any contest, in a very short time. — Here, fill your glass.'

'No more, thanks. But I'll take a cigarette if you have one. — Thanks.'

'Now here's the thing I'm getting at. It's my belief she wouldn't have been quite so stiff with me — I may be wrong, but I don't think I am — if it hadn't been for Arnold Pressey. You know Pressey?'

'Yes, slightly.'

'You probably know that he was one of the home guard. Poor eyesight — general physical debility, I daresay — anyway one of the unfit for active service. And,' Winant burst out explosively, 'a soft-spoken, sanctimonious hypocrite. You're a parson's son, I know, but here's a fellow piously

going to church with my wife while I'm on the other side, doing his bit with his surgical dressings and his knitting and finding all that another opportunity to be attentive to my wife, and always so good, so refined, so high-minded, such a contrast to me! I'm not intimating that my wife ever did anything wrong, you understand; God knows there never was a more truly high-minded person than she is. I don't believe she's in love with him and is divorcing me for that reason. But I think if it hadn't been for the effect that seeing so much of him had on her, if it hadn't been for his interest in her and influence on her, she'd have been willing to give me another chance. And it's just possible I might have shown her I deserved it.'

Winant rose suddenly and paced back and forth between the window and the door in front of the little table behind which Roger sat.

'I wanted to tell you all this,' he said while he continued to walk to and fro, 'so that if you find you still feel about Sally as I think you used to you can save her from Arnold Pressey. You understand, of course, that I'm not saying this out of any special affection for you. I'm saying it out of vindictiveness toward Pressey. And besides, I should rather like to see Sally happy, even if I couldn't make her so.'

Roger poured a little whiskey into his empty glass and reached for the siphon.

'Are you sure that there isn't any chance of your coming together again?' he asked. 'It seems to me almost unnecessary, from what you tell me, that this separation should become final — unnecessary, and,' he added slowly, 'unfortunate.'

'Oh, I've seen to that since I've been back,' Winant answered, with a short laugh. 'I've put myself beyond the pale — and anyway I'm not the sort to go to her as a penitent. No, we couldn't make a go of it now. So dismiss from your mind any idea you may have of trying to heal the

breach, and concentrate on that other thought I've given you.'

'It's a thought that I'm quite unprepared to consider.'

'Sally's living at her father's country place at Bolton. One or two visits out there will probably furnish you with all the preparation you'll need.'

Roger resented the easy raillery of the speech. 'I'm not soliciting any advice on the subject,' he said sharply.

'No, no, I'm doing all the soliciting,' Winant hastened to reply. 'And all I ask is that you give the matter consideration — or take the case under advisement — if I may venture to use the absurd phraseology so common to members of your profession.'

'I'm sorry,' Roger said as he rose to take his departure.

'I wouldn't have you commit yourself; no need of that. Good of you to have come up and been so patient listening to my tale of woe.'

Winant drew aside a chair that partially blocked passage to the door and stood, a gleam of amusement in his pale, cold eyes.

'I can't deny that it's been very interesting.' With his hand on the doorknob Roger hesitated. 'Winant, you've been very anxious to put a thought into my head. Let me put one into yours. Throw your damnable pride and egotism out of the window; wipe the sneer off your face; go back to Sally and beg her to give you another chance. Then perhaps she will.'

He opened the door and stepped out, leaving Winant speechless with anger. When they met later that evening in the billiard-room they ignored each other.

XV

When Roger returned from his next tour of investigation, he found without regret that Spencer Winant was no longer quartered at the Country Club; he had gone to Canada, 'ostensibly' for salmon-fishing, said one of Roger's friends, smiling as he emphasized the adverb. It had become by that time common knowledge among the members that Mrs. Winant was suing for divorce, and that for every reason her husband's absence in a remote region was intelligible and in fact proper.

The brief announcement that the divorce had been granted appeared one morning in the newspapers. That evening Roger dined with Adelaide and Francis; ingratiating himself as he always did on such visits with the gift of a bottle of claret abstracted from his father's cellar. They were no sooner seated in the tiny dining-room than Adelaide said,

'I suppose, Roger, you saw that Sally Winant has got free of her horrid husband?'

'Yes,' Roger answered.

'I'm so glad she had courage enough to take the step. She's been miserably unhappy almost ever since she married him.'

'Why has she delayed so long then?'

'Clara Draper, who sees more of her than anybody else, told me she was afraid Sally would never be able to bring herself to the point of getting a divorce — partly religious scruples and partly pride — a shrinking from what would be a public acknowledgment that her marriage had been a failure. Of course, every one knew that it was. She's been so sensitive about it all; almost nobody except Clara, I think, has seen her since she went to Bolton to live.'

'What do you think is the thing for her friends to do now?'

asked Roger flippantly. 'Send her flowers with a note of congratulation?'

'No, but I do hope people will try to be a little more attentive and kind to her than usual — when she's feeling probably as if they wanted to shun her.'

'If she comes back to town next winter she will be sure to have a sufficiently social time. Of course, if she stays on out at Bolton she won't be likely to see many people.'

'She will appreciate all the more any efforts that her friends may make to see her. And after all, it isn't very far, Roger; you could run out there in half an hour in your car.'

Roger remained as cold to his sister's well-intentioned hint as he had been to the naked suggestion that Spencer Winant had offered to him. It made him uncomfortable to recall that in former days the mere sight of a letter addressed to him in Sally Pendleton's hand had kindled ardent hopes in his breast, and that he had cherished with sentimental fondness commonplace notes that she had penned. Whatever the cause, the charm that she had once had for him had faded. The news that she was free did not arouse in him any faint stirrings of desire. It merely caused him to realize that he was in an embarrassing position and that he would be expected and encouraged by his friends and Sally's to fulfill the part of the patient and faithful lover who has at last been favored by an unforeseen turn of fortune. Certainly he would not go to Bolton.

He had completed his task of investigation into the conditions governing the retail prices of food, clothing, and fuel, and was writing his report when one afternoon a young man presented himself diffidently in his office. He was a young man of rustic appearance; his clothes lacked urban post-war smartness; his coat had no long slash up the back, did not flare out from the waist; it and his trousers and his hat all belonged to the period before the war. He was a sturdy, stalwart young man, with tanned face and hands, a pleasant,

open countenance, and blue eyes that for a moment lost their worried expression as Roger shook hands with him.

'Remember you! Remember the best corporal in the battalion!' Roger exclaimed in reply to the young man's hesitating question. 'It's mighty good to see you again, Miller. I hope everything's going well with you.'

'Not so well in some ways; fine in others,' said the young man. He set forth the situation; he had married since he had got home — a country girl, just the girl for a farmer's wife; he spoke of her with pride and enthusiasm. But on the farm things had reached a crisis. His father had been compelled to mortgage the place; tuberculosis had invaded the herd of Holsteins on which he had depended for the greater part of his revenue, and about half of them had been condemned; no money was available for the purchase of fresh heifers, and unless they were obtained the farm could not be made to pay expenses; the bank that held the mortgage refused to advance a second loan.

'Now that I'm back, I know that Father and I could make a go of it if only we could get started right,' Miller said. 'I don't want to sell out and come to town for a job. But it looks as if that is what I should have to do. Only I thought first I'd see if you might know of some way I could finance the farm. In the army you always made us feel that we might go to you when we were in trouble, and I thought maybe you wouldn't mind my coming now.'

'Just where is the farm?' Roger asked.

'Out at Bolton — about three miles west of the village.'

'I think I'd better go out and have a look at it. What do you say to driving out there with me now? I have a car parked just around the corner.'

'Fine!' exclaimed Miller, his face radiant with sudden hope.

During the drive Miller confided to Roger many details of his life. His mother had died a short time before he had entered the service; his sister Ellen, two years older than him-

self, had given up her position as teacher in the village school and assumed the care of the household; now that his wife was willing and able to take over the management of domestic affairs, Ellen was looking forward to resuming her school work. She had been offered a position in a town a hundred miles away — a very good position, much better than the one she had held in the village school. But she wanted to be able to come back to the farm for her vacations; she had been as blue as any of them, thinking it would be necessary to abandon the place where they had lived.

'Are you anywhere near the Pendleton place?' Roger asked.

'No, Mr. Pendleton lives about two miles from us. He has a fine place.'

'Yes. I've been there several times.'

They came at last to Bolton village, passed the green at opposite ends of which stood two white-painted churches, and took the road that branched off to the left of the red-brick Town Hall. It led out through fertile valley land, meadows and orchards, with here and there a knoll of woodland; the sight of acres of corn in tassel, of apples showing yellow and red in the trees, the clicking sound of a reaper at work in a field of oats, and the cheerful activity of a windmill spinning behind a farmhouse awakened in Roger a longing for rural life. 'Of course you don't want to leave this and go to the city,' he exclaimed. A few moments later Miller pointed to a red farmhouse and a big red barn lying in an angle of the road and said, 'Here we are.'

A comely young woman welcomed them. Miller kissed her and said, 'Jane, this is Major Kendall; he thought he'd like to take a look about the place.'

'Oh, do show him the place first and give me a chance to put the house in order!' pleaded the young woman; she glanced from her husband to Roger eagerly.

So for the next half hour Roger accompanied Miller in a

walk about the farm. He manifested special interest in the apple orchard. There were about fifty old trees, shaggy with suckers, yet many of them bearing a good crop. 'You ought to do more with your apples,' Roger said.

'Father's had to let them go while he worked on the essentials,' Miller explained. 'But if I'm still here this coming winter, I mean to do some pruning on those trees.'

'You could set out a good many young trees on that slope; I should think in a few years you could make money on your apple crop.'

Miller shrugged his shoulders. 'The farmer never makes much of anything out of his apples. By the time he's paid for picking and packing and the cost of barrels and transportation the check he gets from the commission merchant looks pretty small. But,' he added, 'an apple orchard is a mighty decorative thing on a farm. Might help to sell the place — to some one who didn't know much about farming.'

'Well, yes.' Roger seemed amused. 'Perhaps that is its real function.'

Hayfield, wood-lot, pasture — in which were the ten cows that remained of the herd — and finally the barn, with its freshly whitewashed stalls and its well-swept floor — Miller showed them all in a manner that indicated not only his pride and affection for the place but also his consciousness of its shortcomings. There was no such consciousness betrayed when in the tool shed he presented Roger to his father who was making some repairs upon a mowing machine. The elder Miller was sturdy and stocky like his son; his broad, heavy shoulders were bent, his forehead was furrowed, his blue eyes beneath shaggy white eyebrows were patient rather than alert. His overalls and his brown flannel shirt, unbuttoned at the throat, did not detract from his quiet dignity.

'Father swung the place all alone, the two years I was gone,' said the young man. 'Short of help all the time. I don't know another man around here that could have done so well, in the conditions.'

'I had my daughter helping me,' the older man explained. 'You can't do much on a farm without the right sort of woman to help. With the right sort, you can do quite a lot. That's one reason why I think my son's prospects are good — if we can only weather our present difficulties.'

'Do you mind if I ask you some questions?' said Roger.

'I hope you will. I'll answer them as best I can.'

Roger's inquiries resulted in his obtaining a pretty complete understanding of the farmer's financial situation.

'It's not so cheerful as it might be, but it doesn't strike me as hopeless,' Roger said at last. 'There doesn't seem to be any reason to doubt that the farm is all right, and that you two together can make it pay, if you can get a little more capital now.' He studied the memorandum book in which he had jotted down notes and figures. 'I guess I have data enough. I think I can promise that you needn't go on worrying about the situation. You'll hear from me within a week.'

The older man's eyes grew moist with emotion. 'By George, sir, it does take a weight off me to have you say that.'

'It certainly does,' exclaimed the son. 'It was a lucky day for us when I was assigned to your battalion, Major.'

He persuaded Roger to stop for a few minutes at the house — long enough to reassure the two young women who had been waiting in suspense to hear the outcome of the interview that was likely to affect their lives.

Driving away, Roger mused over what he had in mind to do, wondering whether he had yielded to a rash impulse. It was pretty country, anyway, he thought, glancing over the fields to the distant hills; and it was desirable that every man should have a refuge in the country. The summer at the club had convinced Roger that he was imperfectly gregarious in his tastes.

On the road ahead, walking in the same direction as that in which he was traveling, a man and a woman stepped to the side just as he slowed down with the intention of offering to

take them in. He saw then that they were Sally Winant and Arnold Pressey. For an instant he thought of speeding up and rushing by them, in the hope of not being recognized; but he repressed that cowardly impulse, shouted, 'Hello, Sally!' and flung the door of the car hospitably open as he brought it abreast of them.

XVI

The startled look on Sally's face changed instantly to one of eager animation.

'Roger Kendall! How nice to see you!' She reached up a slim hand and grasped his warmly, turned to her companion, and then to Roger again. 'You know Mr. Pressey, don't you, Mr. Kendall?'

'Oh, yes,' said Roger, and nodded; Pressey, a small man, sallow and thin of face, with brown eyes behind horn-rimmed spectacles, acknowledged the salute somewhat timidly. His discomfort at the meeting was obvious.

'We were out for a walk,' said Sally. 'But if you'll promise to stop for tea, Roger, we'll get in with you.'

She entered the car, and Pressey reluctantly followed; she allowed him to cross in front of her and thus she held the seat from which she could most easily carry on a conversation with the driver.

'How do you happen to be out here, Roger?' she asked. 'Some mission connected with the Necessaries of Life?'

'No; just a small matter of business. I had to look at the farm of a man who's in difficulties. You've been in Bolton all summer, have you, Sally?'

'Yes, all summer. I've thought of trying to get you out for a night or a week-end, but when I read and heard of all the important work you were doing, my courage failed me; I felt I oughtn't to bother such a busy man.'

'I have been busy, and I've been away a good deal, but I'm afraid the results of my work aren't very important.'

'We're all looking to you to reduce the cost of living. You mustn't disappoint us.'

'You mustn't expect more of me than the governor who

put me on the job does. I shall be mighty glad when I get my report finished and can see a little more of my friends.'

'I hope being away from them for two years hasn't made you feel that it's quite easy to get on without them.'

'Quite the contrary. One comes back wanting to make up for lost time. — The country round Bolton has changed remarkably little in five years, hasn't it?'

'Is it as long as that since you have been here, Roger?'

'Yes; it's five years ago.'

There was no need for him to specify the occasion of that last visit — the day of her marriage to Spencer Winant. She was silent; Roger felt it was time to draw Arnold Pressey into the conversation.

'Do you live in this neighborhood, Mr. Pressey?' he asked.

'No,' Pressey said, and then added somewhat grudgingly, 'I've just driven out from town too.'

'I'm sorry then that I can't have the pleasure of your company going in. It seems unnecessary for so many people to be driving round all alone in automobiles, doesn't it? It goes against my economic sense. It seems as if we all ought to arrange to double up somehow.'

'You're doing about all you can at this moment to remedy the situation,' said Sally. 'And I guess you don't ride alone very much, Roger. I think you probably are always giving lifts to people along the road.'

'Only to those who don't demand them,' said Roger. 'Boys who stand out in the road and gesticulate with their thumbs — never. I speed up whenever I see a youth who's doing that.'

'And yet I suppose that sometimes there's a deserving person among them,' Pressey remarked gently. 'I have the same feeling as you about such people, Mr. Kendall, but often I'm weak-minded — or tender-minded, I suppose William James would have called it — and I say to myself, "Perhaps that boy who's signaling to me to stop is in a hurry to summon a

doctor"; and then I stop and take him in. It's a weakness, of course.'

It was not so much the speech as the deprecating, unnecessarily gentle manner of it that irritated Roger. 'No boy who stands out in the road jerking his thumb at passing automobiles is ever in distress,' he said bluntly. 'I don't need to go to William James or any other psychologist for light on that point.'

Sally laughed but the little man by her side maintained a silence that seemed to Roger resentful and that added to his irritation.

Driving up to the long stucco house with the fan-shaped windows and the iron grilles in front of them, Roger recalled with painful distinctness the last occasion when he had seen it. The afternoon sunshine had brightened the smooth lawn then just as it did now and had burnished, as now, the noble copper beech, the solitary tree that stood in front of the house. There had been champagne to keep one's spirits up, and Roger had a quite objective vision of himself standing on the steps, laughing foolishly and hurling confetti, while the bride and groom were entering an automobile the wheels of which had been decorated with bows of white satin. What a sorry festival it all had been, in the light of subsequent events!

Yet when, seated in the drawing-room, he was able to study Sally's appearance, he could not but wonder that the intervening years had written nothing upon her face. In her simple blue gingham dress she looked as girlish as in the days when he had courted her; he could almost imagine himself as living over again an episode of those days, obstinately bent on outstaying an intrusive visitor — a rival suitor. Yet never had there been a suitor like this little man, sitting with knees and feet pressed tight together, holding his teacup and saucer with both elbows pressed close to his sides, prim, precise, timorous, but egotistically anxious to assert himself. He began to talk about tea; this tea was of a delicious aroma and

savor, but he had a special brand that he got from Ceylon — he had been getting it ever since the time when he spent a couple of months there on his trip round the world, in 1913 — and he would like to have Mrs. Winant try it some time; he would bring her some of it — a smoky tea, if one cared for a tea of that kind. Roger thought him pitiable. His presence was a sad commentary on Sally's altered estate. Formerly she had never had any trouble in keeping such people at a distance; now, apparently, she did not even care to do so.

Roger resolved to outstay Pressey — in fact, to drive him from the house as soon as possible. Then he would himself be able to leave the sooner — and he had no other desire.

'Really, I think it was rather rough, Sally, that you should have waited for chance to bring about a meeting between us,' he said. 'You see I haven't forgotten that when I had that glimpse of you at church you promised to have me out here for a night or a week-end.'

She seemed pleased that he should have remembered her promise, and a little embarrassed too.

'To tell the truth, when I thought it over I was pretty sure that if you ever really wanted to come you would telephone out and ask if you might.'

'Just as I used to do in the old days?' It was perhaps unkind to Sally, but it was necessary that Pressey should speedily realize that his presence was undesirable. 'Things seemed so very different. It hardly occurred to me that I might venture.'

'Roger! You should have known — it would have meant a lot to me!'

He was somewhat dismayed at the success of his attempt to have Pressey left unregarded. At any rate the effect upon the little man was immediate. He rose, put down his teacup, and said, 'I must be going now, Mrs. Winant.'

'Oh, must you?' she said, rising. 'So sorry.' She gave him her hand. 'You'll come again soon, won't you, Mr. Pressey?

And then we can finish our walk — unless Mr. Kendall happens along again with his car!'

Pressey replied, 'I hope so!' but his tone was doubting and lugubrious rather than confident and enthusiastic.

Sally said, after they had heard the sound of his car starting, 'He's a very fine sort of person when you come to know him — only life has made him too much on the defensive. That's often apt to create a bond between people,' she added vaguely. 'He was so distressed at not being able to take any part in the war. And when he finds himself with people who did, he always seems ill at ease.'

'I'm afraid then I drove him away,' said Roger shamelessly. 'And that was rather unnecessary, for I shall have to be leaving too in a few minutes.'

Her face fell. 'Oh, must you? I hoped I might persuade you to stay and dine with us. Do stay! It's so long since we've seen each other!'

Such an appeal he could not resist. 'I shall be only too delighted to stay,' he assured her.

'I call that friendly! When there's probably a game of bridge waiting for you at the club! Should you like to take a turn about the place? There are some new things here since you last visited it.'

They walked to the stables. 'I have something here that I'm really proud of,' said Sally; 'I'll bring him out and show him to you.' She took a halter and entered one of the stalls, addressing endearing words to the occupant. Then she led forth a beautiful bay stallion, that stepped delicately and carried his head proudly and looked about with fearless, intelligent eyes.

'My new hunter; he arrived from Virginia just two weeks ago. Isn't he a beauty!'

The horse tossed his head as if conscious and somewhat impatient of the admiring scrutiny to which he was being subjected.

'He's afraid of nothing; yesterday I put him at a five-foot jump; it was thrilling! Look at his eyes, Roger; there's spirit in them, but they're kind and trusting. Don't you think he's a darling?'

'Yes; without doubt he's a prize-winner. How old is he?'

'Three years. I rode him when I was in Virginia last March; I felt then that I must have him, and yet I had no idea that the Rolands might consent to sell him. Don't you think I'm lucky?'

'I do — and I hope you'll continue to be, if you go on riding at five-barred fences.'

'I trust him, and he trusts me — don't we, old boy?' She patted the horse's neck, and he flung his head round to her responsively. 'And there are worse things than risking a broken neck. Come, old fellow; back to the stall.'

'You're as much a dare-devil as ever at cross-country riding, I gather,' Roger said when she had rejoined him.

'I never tire of it. And it's a thing that takes one so completely out of one's self — helps one to forget everything else!'

'This autumn I must take it up again. I've hardly been on a horse in the last two years.'

'Why don't you come out here for our cross-country runs, Roger? There are to be two a week from the Bolton Hunt Club, beginning the middle of October. They're really quite good fun. We have three hunters in the stable now; Father would be only too glad to have you ride either Comet or Zeb. Or, if you want to ride your own mount, you could send him out here and we could take care of him for you through the season.'

'Thank you very much, Sally. I don't believe I could take part in many of the runs, but I should like to get into two or three of them. If I do, it will be my own horse that I ride; I don't want to risk injuring some one else's hunter.'

'Of course you'd feel that way!' She gave him a glance of

friendly, humorous approval. 'Dear me, I've played round with so many irresponsible persons in the last few years I had almost forgotten that some people might still have such scruples! But you know, Father would gladly trust you with any of his horses.'

'I ride my own or nobody's; perhaps it's caution rather than scruple. Does your father still hunt as recklessly as ever?'

'He had a bad fall last year, and I made him promise to be more careful. But as the season approaches he gets more and more eager; and when he goes off riding by himself, as he's done this afternoon, I never know what he may be up to. I shouldn't be at all surprised to learn that he's been putting Comet over some quite stiff jumps somewhere.'

'You and he need to watch each other pretty closely, I should say.'

'That only irritates him. I can sympathize with his point of view. Now that he's retired from business and does nothing but read and look after the place, he needs excitement. And he doesn't much care what he risks in getting it. He's kept his courage and his cheerfulness since my mother died, but I think that deep down he feels life isn't anything to cling to any longer. Various things probably have brought him to that state of mind.'

She spoke calmly; the serenity of her face masked whatever feeling lay behind her words. Yet Roger received an impression of tragedy; and while she conducted him through the garden and showed him the view of the hills across the intervale of meadow and woodland he was preoccupied with a sense that for those who dwelt in this lovely place life had become mainly an experience of suffering.

John Pendleton's appearance bore out this impression as little as did his daughter's. He entered the library where Roger sat alone — Sally having gone to dress for dinner — and greeted the guest heartily. He was a slim, distinguished-looking man, and wore his riding clothes with a certain youth-

ful grace, despite his white hair and moustache and the deep wrinkles beneath his eyes.

'You've been offered all the hospitality of the house?' he asked. 'Cigars, cigarettes — ? We'll have a cocktail after I've changed my clothes. I still have a few bottles of gin left. Having to surrender my personal liberty to a fanatical tyranny — it's one more reason for viewing with equanimity the prospect of an early removal from this vale of tears.'

'You look as if you would have to endure the tyranny for a considerable time yet,' said Roger.

'I hope not. It's too dismal an outlook. Everything's being taken from us. Taxes! Good Lord! As my old friend, George Warren, often remarks, "God help the rich; the poor can beg." Make yourself at home.'

He left the room with a sprightly step for one of so melancholy a spirit.

At dinner he admitted under his daughter's insistent questioning that in the course of his ride he had taken two or three walls and a few fences.

'But I shan't do any jumping with Comet after this unless there's some one with us to provide competition,' he said. 'He's getting lazy; he refused at the gate in the upper pasture; to tell the truth, I wasn't expecting anything of the sort and I almost went over his head.'

'Of course I wish you wouldn't do any jumping with any horse unless there's some one with you,' said Sally.

'A man must do something for his liver at my age,' replied her father. 'And, besides, since Harris left us, I've never had a groom that could be depended on to handle a hunter properly. But Roger isn't interested in all this. Let's talk about something else — anything else, except the war.'

'Yes,' agreed Roger. 'Anything but the war.'

'You've been doing something since you got home, I believe, to loosen the grip of the rascally profiteers on the Necessaries of Life. I hope that before you're done you'll succeed in putting a lot of them in jail.'

'I haven't collected any evidence that would warrant me in making any such attempt,' Roger answered.

'Evidence! Aren't the prices we have to pay evidence enough of criminal extortion? If you don't find out who are at the bottom of this extortion, what's your work for!'

'It's an economic rather than a criminal investigation that our commission has been conducting.'

'Yes, yes, that's the modern fallacy — trying to attribute the results of human greed, crookedness, and dishonesty to economic causes and conditions. — Well, we can't discuss that either, any more than the war. I'm so much out of the world nowadays that when I'm not riding or working about the place I live in books — rubbishy books, for the most part. Novels, English novels, American novels — rubbishy novels.'

'How are we ever going to talk about anything?' asked Roger despairingly. 'I almost never read a novel. I wonder why you do, Mr. Pendleton, since you find them so rubbishy.'

'It's a useful occupation for a man who's retired from business. It satisfies his impulse to be always criticizing; it's good for the spleen. What I object to most of all in these modern novels is the fact that they are serious, mistakenly earnest studies of amorousness — of mere libertinism. Take the old masters — take the writers of the eighteenth century even, when a certain license was to be expected. Why, in Fielding and Smollett and Sterne libertinism never pretended to be anything but what it is. It assumed no meretricious dignity or importance. Go back to Shakespeare; he gave the world immortal sketches of chronic amorists. Yes — and he always made them ridiculous or contemptible or villainous. He never undertook to found a higher social morality on mere sensual desire, or to attribute the greatest virility to those who are most overmastered by desire. But that's what these modern realists do — and how many silly, light-headed people look on them as deep thinkers — philosophers!'

'You're very likely right,' said Roger. 'Only I supposed

that not many persons are influenced by novels nowadays.'

'Oh, I think they have quite an effect among our young so-called intelligentsia. In fact I can think of one young man who has, I should say, tried to be a sort of composite hero of these modern sex novels. It's a vicious circle — people taking standards and views of life from the novelists, and the novelists continually writing new novels based on the actions of people whose minds they have poisoned.'

Sally, who had been looking quite uncomfortable, spoke with impatience.

'Roger will begin to think you have an obsession.'

'I can see,' Roger said, 'that my only safe course is to continue to smoke, drink, golf, and play bridge, but never to read any fiction. I thought that I had probably made a rather sensible choice of occupation.'

So the talk drifted away to other topics, but Roger felt that John Pendleton continued to force the note of vivacity and that Sally's laughter was of the lips, not of the eyes.

After dinner when they had gone into the long room that opened on the terrace, Pendleton said, 'I have some writing to do this evening. Come and see us often, Roger — perhaps you'll find I'm not always so violent.'

'I hope you always will be,' said Roger. 'It's very rousing and stimulating — and my family all complain of my lethargy.'

After Pendleton had departed, Roger seated himself in a chair half way across the room from Sally who was sitting at one end of a sofa. He had deliberately chosen not to sit beside her; that sofa had been literally the scene of all his courtship; sitting with her there he had again and again sought to persuade her to marry him.

She talked with him for a few moments about her father, of whose mental and physical alertness he spoke with admiration.

'It seems to me that there are more elderly people who are

young and more young people who are aged and experienced than there used to be,' he said.

'Perhaps it's a pose on the part of both — though I don't think it is with Father — at least not often. Sometimes of course I know that his exuberance is simply the expression of an effort to be cheerful when he really is depressed.'

'If it's depression that causes him to be so lively, I can't imagine how he behaves in moments of exhilaration.'

'Oh, then he's on a horse. And that's when I really worry about him.'

An odd smile passed over her face and left a teasing, cajoling look in her eyes.

'Why do you sit way off there, Roger? It makes it so hard to talk to you. You're not afraid of me, are you?'

He laughed, came and sat down beside her.

'Now I don't feel so much as if you were a stranger, making a formal call. Tell me about Adelaide. I thought her husband seemed most attractive, and when I lunched with her in town one day she quoted him and talked about him in a way that was perfectly delightful.'

'Yes, Adelaide's very happy — and so, I may say, is my new brother-in-law.'

'Isn't it fortunate that it should turn out so — a romance that was so lightning quick in reaching a climax! So different from most affairs of that kind.' Sally sighed and lapsed for a moment into silence. 'But poor Leonard — he's been so devoted, and he is so nice — my heart bled for him.'

'It must have been a disappointment to him, of course. But like most men who've had a similar experience, he seems to have adjusted himself to the situation without too much difficulty.'

'Oh, I suppose so. Nothing is much more elastic than a man's heart, is it, Roger? And poor little women with consciences, what a lot of unnecessary reproach they visit on themselves sometimes!'

'No man, I am sure, ever wants a woman to reproach herself on his account.'

'No, probably not; but the soft silly creatures often can't help it.' She hesitated; she was twisting her wedding ring, the only ring she wore, nervously; she turned to Roger with a sudden challenge. 'You mustn't think, Roger, that I've been speaking at all of myself. I didn't reproach myself on your account.'

'You certainly had no reason to.'

'No. But in my heart I've reproached you very often.'

'I'm sorry. I hadn't realized I'd given you any ground for such a feeling.'

'Shall I tell you?' Her eyes were bright from agitation, her voice was low and tremulous. 'You know, of course, everybody knows now, what a hideous mistake I made. But I don't suppose anybody but myself knows how I came to make it.'

'It wasn't very surprising, I think. Winant was good-looking, bright, attractive. He might have won any girl.'

'If he had simply been content to follow your method of courtship, Roger, he would never have won me.' She smiled a little sadly and looked down at her hands which now lay clasped in her lap. 'Do you see why I have often reproached you in my thoughts, these last five years?'

'I'm afraid I'm very dull. No, I don't see.'

'It pleased me, it flattered me to hear the things you used to say to me. I couldn't help being delighted that you found me attractive — that you wanted to marry me. But I was so very inexperienced — so very virginal! I wanted some act that would convince me, some sure sign of revelation in my own heart — and you never ventured on anything warm and convincing and personal, did you, Roger? We used to sit side by side on this sofa, just as we're sitting now, and you used to tell me — well, you remember the sort of thing you used to say, I suppose?'

Roger nodded, in silence.

'And I used to say, "Oh, do you feel that way about me! I like it, but I don't seem to have any such feeling about you!" Yes, I always held you off, didn't I? You had to confine your love-making just to words. You were afraid of going too far, of being too bold, and I didn't dare to give you any encouragement. And then Spencer came, and he wasn't afraid and he didn't wait for encouragement — and I, silly, inexperienced little fool, felt that the revelation of what love really is had come to me. Oh, Roger, Roger, why shouldn't I have reproached you all these years!'

Her voice quivered, seemed almost to break in a sob; tears glistened in her eyes.

'I'm sorry,' he said after a moment, acutely aware that he was again resorting to ineffective words when action was demanded.

'It wasn't long,' she continued, trying to keep control of her voice, 'before I found out. Then every day the misery of my life made me know how happy I might have been!'

Then suddenly the tears overflowed; she dropped her head forward upon her arms and wept.

Roger gazed at her with dismay. 'Don't, Sally; don't!' he pleaded, but the appeal seemed unheard. He looked at the pretty white neck above which the smooth brown hair was brushed so gracefully, at the bare shoulders beneath which the bosom was heaving so distressfully; and then a strange mingling of motives — all of them as he knew even then in a confused way inadequate and mistaken — compassion, desire, and an impulse to demonstrate to her that he was not without venturesomeness, caused him to put his arm round her caressingly and say, 'Sally, dear, don't cry any more!'

She responded at once to his sympathy; in a moment her head was resting on his breast and her arms were encircling him. 'Hold me tight, Roger dear,' she besought him, and turning her face up to his she invited the kiss that now, utterly

bewildered, he had not the courage to refuse. Her own kisses roused him to a passionate exchange; and Sally murmured, 'Oh, Roger dear, I know that I shall be all the happier for having been so miserable!'

XVII

Roger withdrew his arm and stood up abruptly.

'I oughtn't to have done that, Sally. We're both of us a bit reckless to-night.'

Her face was radiant as she said, 'Of course I feel reckless — when you make me so happy!'

'I think we both of us need to get our bearings. I lost my head. I'm sorry.'

Then she rose and looked at him with eyes grave and questioning.

'Of course,' she replied, 'you are not to feel that what has passed between us limits your freedom of action in the least.'

He exclaimed impulsively, 'Sally, I had put you out of my mind, completely; that's the truth. And whether some one else has the place there that used to be yours —'

'How surprised then she would have been if she could have seen us just now!'

'She's unaware of my feeling for her.'

'If it's real, why don't you tell her? You seem so ready in expressing a feeling that isn't genuine!'

'I know I shouldn't have acted on a moment's impulse.'

'Some persons might say that you shouldn't have repudiated your action.'

He could make no answer.

'But I don't say it,' she added. 'You can go in peace and without another thought of me, Roger. Good-bye.' She offered him her hand. 'We must try to forget all this and meet each other as if it had never been.'

'You're being very generous, Sally.'

But he received no pressure from the hand that she gave him, and on her face there was a look of bitterness and hardness that he had never seen before.

His own mortification seemed to increase while he drove homeward. He had fancied himself to be a person of some stability of mind and character and some sagacity; he had never cherished the illusion that he was brilliant or that he had any exceptional endowment of grace and charm. Now he was befogged; he strove to explain himself to himself. He had been thrown off his balance utterly, a thing that he had not supposed could ever happen to him; and in the consternation occasioned by the discovery he had thought of nothing but the necessity of immediately regaining his balance. What if he had tried to orient himself to the new conditions that had been created, instead of scrambling madly back to the wreckage of the old? It might not have been so impossible.

What was it that her father had talked about — chronic amorists — always ridiculous, or contemptible, or villainous! Had he behaved like one of those? Yet nothing had been further from his intention than to make love to Sally. And he never did things prematurely, without due thought and deliberation.

His first indiscretion had been his sentimental and familiar reference to the past, 'the old days,' that had been so successful in driving Pressey from the house. That had misled her; she as well as Pressey had concluded that there was deep feeling behind it. It had emboldened her to call him to the seat on the sofa by her side. Yet he had neither said nor done anything that expressed more than friendly interest until in the recital of her woes, a recital that he had not encouraged, she gave way to tears. She had been only half right in thinking that the feeling he had shown when he had kissed her had not been genuine. It had taken him by surprise in the flood in which it had rushed upon him. In an effort to escape being swept to an involuntary decision, and to maintain his prudent habit of weighing important issues with due deliberation, he had reminded her that they were behaving recklessly.

Why couldn't he have been content — rapturously content — at recapturing something of his former passion and finding her, ardent and loving, in his arms?

Round a bend in the road, following an exploring shaft of light, glared the headlamps of a car; it was traveling rapidly and on the left-hand side, and it veered off to the right just in time to avoid a collision. 'Mind what you're about!' shouted Roger angrily. The outburst had a tonic effect on him; he began to feel combative in his own behalf. It was only right and proper that a man should think twice before entering into an engagement to marry. If he had made a sorry showing, Sally had not by any means been at her best.

The next day, on his arrival at his office he found in his mail a letter from Isabel. She had discontinued the use of black-bordered envelopes. The note was characteristically laconic; it consisted of but one sentence: 'I shall return on Monday.' His spirits rose; the prospect of seeing her so soon was exciting. Then the thought crossed his mind — suppose that both those women should show a relentless, unforgiving spirit toward him! How extraordinary it was that as a result of well-intentioned acts of sympathy on his part the only two women whom he had ever loved should have turned coldly from him!

He had given no consideration to the affairs of the Miller family since he had driven away from the farm. The problem which they presented and for which, while studying it, he had thought he had found a solution had become difficult overnight; he was no longer sure that he cared to propose the plan that had occurred to him. It had become in fact distasteful even to consider it. He occupied himself during the morning with other matters; in the afternoon he attended a committee meeting; it was late when he finally returned to his office. On his desk he found a letter addressed to him in Sally's hand, sent by special delivery. It read:

BOLTON
Thursday morning

DEAR ROGER:

I was as much to blame as you for what happened last night. Since we have to divide the responsibility equally it ought not to be so hard for us to face each other. I am afraid I was quite horrid to you, and I am sorry. Show your forgiveness by coming out again some time; and remember, you have promised to ride with us in some of the autumn meets.

Sincerely yours
SALLY WINANT

Roger called to his secretary.

'Miss Colver, when did that special delivery letter come?'

'About half an hour ago, Mr. Kendall.'

'I was glad to get it. It means that I can go ahead with a deal that I had in mind.'

The envelope bore the postmark of the city — 2 P.M. 'She probably drove in with it herself after writing it and posted it in town so that I should be sure to get it to-day,' he thought. That reflection deepened his gratitude. How unkind and unjust he had been in imputing any element of hardness or cruelty to Sally, who had shown herself so sweet and gentle and forgiving! He wrote to her at once:

Thursday afternoon

DEAR SALLY:

I have just received your note, and it makes me happier than I deserve to feel or than I thought I could feel. Of course I'll come out again soon, and I'll ride in the autumn meets with you. Thank you very, very much.

Sincerely yours
ROGER KENDALL

He summoned Miss Colver and dictated a letter to Miller in which he proposed that he should buy the farm, taking over the mortgage and paying three thousand dollars in cash; that Miller should take a five-year lease, with the option of

renewal — paying the taxes on the place but no rent; that to the new owner should accrue all the receipts from the apple orchard, which he would renew and enlarge, until it should cover the whole hillside; that all other receipts from the farm should accrue to the tenant. 'I should also like,' Roger added, 'to build a wing on the west side of the house — two rooms and a bath — for my own occupancy, at week-ends or for such occasional periods as I may wish to spend at the farm — provided that such an addition would not be disagreeable to your family and that I could make some arrangement for obtaining board. I am willing that you should have the option of buying back the property at any time for the price paid for it plus the cost of the addition to the house. I hope that you will accept this offer of mine, for I should like to have a place in the country to which I might go whenever I pleased; I should like to try my hand at apple growing; and I should like to be able to feel that the people in charge of the place that I buy are absolutely competent and trustworthy. If for any reason you feel you can't accept these terms, I have no doubt that a loan can be arranged that will tide you over your present difficulties. But I am so much interested in having the other proposal go through that unless you tell me it's necessary I won't go into any details about a loan.'

As a result of this letter, in spite of some demur on the part of the Millers to a proposal that they regarded as of unprecedented generosity, Roger was able to install his own hunter in his own stable on his farm at Bolton before the opening of the hunting season.

XVIII

Although the knowledge that Isabel Ashton had returned and had opened her house increased Roger's impatience to see her, he tantalized himself with the hope that she would voluntarily appear at an early day in his office; he had notified her before she left Bar Harbor that there were certain matters pending which he did not wish to decide without first consulting her and that he would therefore like to have a talk with her soon after her return. All the week he waited, but in vain.

Meanwhile, he had seen Sally Winant; he had called on her one day after transacting some business relating to his new estate. She had just come in from riding. In her brown cutaway coat and breeches she was a boyish little figure; under her derby hat, with her hair drawn back and gathered in a tight knot her face seemed sharper and yet more youthful than when he had last seen her. She received him cordially and seemed unembarrassed by any memories, but she did not take her accustomed seat on the sofa. She gave frank expression to her satisfaction at hearing that he was to be a neighbor — even though only an occasional sojourner and at a distance of three miles. She thought that every hard-working city man ought to have a foothold in the country; she was sure that in a short time Roger would be known as the Apple King of Bolton. 'You must make this house your headquarters while you're building the addition to the farmhouse,' she said.

Roger found himself wondering if it was still possible for his romantic feeling for her to revive. The picture of Isabel intervened. She had a charm more delicate than Sally's, a surer intuition and perception; she would never permit herself to get into a position from which she could not escape

without some loss of dignity. And yet the composure and the friendliness with which Sally faced him after that miserable evening were appealing — if they did not imply perhaps a certain insensitiveness. Why should any such reservation intrude itself? If Isabel proved unattainable, could he not quite easily turn to Sally? He despised himself for raising the question.

On the next fine Sunday morning Roger forswore the temptation to play golf; instead, he went to the service at Saint Stephen's. He had not seen Hoyt for some time, had not heard him preach since his return from France. From the seat that he took in the rear of the church, he was interested in observing the people as they entered and passed up the aisles. At Saint Paul's young children were seldom to be seen; such members of the congregation as had them left them at home in charge of nursemaids. But most of the worshippers at Saint Stephen's who were parents had no nursemaids to whom to commit the care of their children, and rather than absent themselves from the service they chose to risk having it disturbed by manifestations of infantile restlessness and discontent. Roger was dismayed when such a family, father, mother and three children, the oldest not more than seven, drove him to the innermost recess of the long pew of which he had hoped to be the sole occupant. The middle-sized child, a girl in a red dress with a red bow in her hair, was placed nearest to him and at once displayed an interest in her neighbor which her parents did not attempt to check. She was a bold-faced child with unfeeling brown eyes; she desired to know his name and where he lived and commented on his funny-looking hat. Roger felt apprehensive lest she should continue to address him after the service had begun, and also lest other persons in the vicinity should assume that the child belonged to him. He had definite and fastidious ideas as to the kind of child to which he might reasonably seem to stand in the relation of parent.

Nearly all the women in the congregation were plainly dressed, and the men for the most part wore clothes befitting the husbands of plainly dressed wives. The few who affected a ceremonious garb for the occasion were attired in the antiquated frock coat. Here and there, however, Roger noted younger men who evidently prided themselves somewhat on their snappy appearance and who were accompanied by young women of the flapper type, with bobbed hair and a startlingly high color.

The organist had begun to play the opening bars of the processional hymn when to Roger's amazement a deferential usher escorted Isabel Ashton up the aisle. She was dressed in gray, exquisite from her hat to her shoes, with her veil partly drawn back from her face.

During the service Roger sought vainly to obtain a glimpse of her. Only her hat was visible to him. He wondered what motive had caused her on her first Sunday in town to come to Hoyt's church. Services were being conducted at Saint Paul's in his father's absence; even if she had chosen on this Sunday not to go to the church where she was a regular attendant, it was odd that she should have come to hear Hoyt preach after having expressed, as he himself had admitted, a wish never to see him again. If she had decided to forgive Hoyt, Roger thought, might she not have found too that she was ready to condone an act of deception committed under an impulse of compassion? Or could it be that as one who had boldly told her the truth had gained her interest, whoever had deceived her had forfeited her friendship? Was that the significance of her curt notes, of her failure to communicate with him since her return?

His thoughts wandered from the service; standing, sitting, kneeling, whatever his outward appearance may have indicated, he was not truly performing any devotional exercises. Yet when Hoyt ascended into the pulpit and gave out the text, 'The 79th Psalm, 11th verse; "According to the great-

ness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die,"' Roger involuntarily yielded him attention. Hoyt spoke without manuscript or notes, with no gestures, scarcely ever varying his position — leaning forward slightly and addressing his audience earnestly, without rhetorical effort, in a low, pleasant voice which, as the thought that it expressed took form, seemed to acquire a tone of deeper sincerity.

'Perhaps a modern illustration — a comparatively modern illustration — will bring the significance of the text more vividly before you. When Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he said to his son-in-law, "Be a good man. It is all that will comfort you when you lie here."

'The greatness of God's power to preserve those who are appointed to die is dependent on their own mental attitude and on their own efforts.

'Many people regard it as morbid ever to think about death — to consider death in relation to themselves. It is true that some persons dwell morbidly on the idea of death and that their preoccupation with it is harmful to them and to those near them. Nevertheless I believe that so far as Christianity has failed — and no one will venture to maintain that after more than nineteen hundred years of struggle its triumph is complete — it has failed mainly because most of those who have professed it have chosen to put away from them the thought of death.

'Is it strange to you that I who have not so long since come back from France where I was with men who for months could not put away from them the thought of death, should say this? The attitude of the soldier in the trenches toward death was a simple one. He believed that if it should come to him it would reach and pluck him when he was putting forth the supreme effort of his body and soul in a cause that transcended any other for which he had ever labored. The soldier's faith that a good death atones for the evil done in life and opens the gates of paradise — the soldiers who have been

most thoroughly imbued with that faith have been the bravest fighters.

'But in time of peace, the imminence of death becomes less real. Healthy, normal people shun the thought of it; in avoiding thought of the decay of the physical body, they shut themselves off equally from meditation on the birth of the spiritual body; and they live their lives careless of the influences and conditions that may affect that birth. Medical science has made available to mothers knowledge of prenatal hygiene for the body; it is for the Church to make more widely available, and more convincing, knowledge of prenatal hygiene for the soul. Could it inspire each member to consider each day that ultimately the consciousness which is himself must undergo that new birth, that the nature of his daily actual physical life must affect the potentialities of that new self that is destined to come into being, that the daily aims and efforts and preoccupations, the daily acts of justice and of oppression, of generosity and of selfishness, of courage and of dishonor, nourish and strengthen the embryo of the soul or impair its chance of future development — could the Christian Church make all Christians vividly, vitally realize this fact and govern their daily lives in accordance with the principles that the daily thought of death as a new birth must inevitably implant in them, this bringing of death into the lives of men would be the means of happiness and the safeguard of civilization.'

The child sitting beside Roger had been fidgeting; her brother became restless; they began to push each other and to complain of each other's actions. The mother reached out a pacifying hand, the father leaned forward and turned on them a threatening face; there was whimpered protest and stern admonition in hushed voices, and then the disturbers subsided sulkily into quiet. Roger's attention had been distracted from the sermon; when he was able once more to give heed to it, the preacher was saying,

'The success with which people are able to avert their minds from the thought of death accounts in a great measure for the tendency to live as if this life were all. Whoever is sincerely convinced that death is extinction is pretty sure to attach far more importance to the material and sensuous than to the spiritual satisfaction that this life offers. Desire for the material and sensuous satisfaction and disdain for the spiritual make men harsh, oppressive, and unjust. In combating the growth of materialism and unbelief, the Church prevents the spread of oppression and injustice.

'I speak of the Church as the agency, but I do not necessarily mean by that the organization of the Church. Religion is in the heart. It is personal. It is not essentially a mass activity. It is quite possible that a thoroughly religious and devout person may never attend a church service; it is quite possible that persons who have no real religion in their hearts may be regular attendants at church services. Do not let any one think that the mere act of attendance at this church or any other is a meritorious act. Church attendance that is inspired by any other motive than an honest desire to worship God and receive spiritual strength should be discouraged. No one should let his attendance at church represent the complete expression of his religious life. In solitude, not in the company of neighbors and friends and strangers, a man's personal expression of his religious life must be made. Therefore let me urge you all, neighbors and friends and strangers, to orient yourselves daily to the idea of death as the inevitable experience for which your souls are preparing, so that, when the time of change and rebirth comes, the spirit, strengthened for its flight, will beat off gloriously into the heaven that awaits it — not lie a feeble, half-developed, invalid spirit, that has to be tended somewhere between earth and heaven, for years or centuries or ages, until at last it acquires sufficient vigor to continue on its journey and join the companions that it longs for. — Now to God the Father —'

When the service ended, the family that had crowded Roger to the inner section of the pew were dilatory about taking their departure. Hats had to be got out from under the seat and a search made for a dropped glove or a handkerchief. Meanwhile Roger stood chafing over his imprisonment and saw Isabel pass down the aisle. She did not turn her head toward him; she moved on apparently unaware of his presence. There seemed no prospect of his overtaking her; when he at last got out into the aisle he had to adapt his pace to that of the slowly moving throng. She would no doubt drive away before he could come near enough to speak to her.

Then he saw her standing at the left of the doorway, looking on while the others passed in single file before the clergyman and received his greeting. So absorbed was she in the spectacle that she did not notice Roger until he stepped from the line and addressed her.

'Mr. Kendall!' she exclaimed, and she gave him her hand cordially. 'You too a renegade from Saint Paul's!'

'I think I'm entitled to something else than reproach for being seen in church at all while my family are still away,' he answered.

'Mr. Hoyt would say it all depends on the motive.'

'My motives are always good,' he assured her.

He regretted that speech instantly for it caused the sparkle that had seemed a pledge of friendliness to die out of her eyes.

'I've been hoping very much to see you,' he said quickly. 'I suppose you're not by any chance walking — ?'

'No. I have a car. I would offer you a ride, but I'm waiting to have a talk with Mr. Hoyt, and I don't know just how long it may be.'

'It really is rather important that I should go over some matters with you soon. Couldn't you make an appointment for some day this week?'

'I remember now you did write that you wanted to see

me soon after my arrival. I've been busy getting settled, and I never once thought of your note. I can come in to your office to-morrow morning.'

'At what time?'

'Ten o'clock?'

'Then I will expect you. Good-bye.'

He turned from her to shake hands with Hoyt; a few moments later he was walking briskly uptown, on his way to luncheon with Adelaide and Francis. The meeting with Isabel had put him in a happy frame of mind. He wondered if it wasn't a mistake for Hoyt to preach a sermon so somber in character as that of the morning; it certainly would be a mistake for him to do it often. The poor man's mind was obviously working under the influence of a great sorrow; the contemplation of death engrossed him too much. Roger was quite sure that for himself at any rate there was nothing to be gained by indulging in frequent reflection on what could not be other than a depressing subject. There was something to be said for the people who lived as if this life were all — heartily did their best in it, without troubling their minds with questions about the future or eternity.

Roger felt there was no inspiration, no spiritual stimulus that he could obtain from thinking about death that he could not derive more agreeably from thinking about Isabel Ashton, who for him represented life in its most delightful manifestation.

XIX

'I HOPE I'm punctual,' said Isabel Ashton. 'Though as I've kept you waiting for a week I can't expect you to think I'm prompt.'

She took the chair that Roger placed for her beside his desk; she looked cool and fresh and in Roger's eyes enchanting. In her smart gray suit of shepherd's plaid, with the black satin facings and the pleated skirt, and wearing a hat decorated with pink roses, she had nothing of the dependent and pathetic character that had seemed to belong to her when she was in mourning. Whether intentionally or not, from the moment of her entrance she had conveyed to Roger the impression that her attitude toward him was impersonal rather than friendly — more impersonal indeed than it had been the preceding day in the first moment of meeting. She looked at him, quietly expectant.

'I've taken an option on a piece of property that I think it's advisable for you to buy,' said Roger. 'As the purchase would involve spending not merely a considerable sum of money now but a much larger sum later, I felt I had better present the matter to you for your decision. You know that the Bristol Apartments have been earning you a very good return on the investment. The three houses just west of them belonging to the Proctor estate can be bought at a reasonable figure. I have gone over the situation pretty thoroughly with Mr. Ward, of the Baird Real Estate Company — it's Mr. Ward, you know, who has had charge of the renting of the apartments in the Bristol; and he is sure that to pull down those three old houses and build another fine apartment house like the Bristol would be a profitable thing to do. Not immediately — not with the cost of building what it now is — but eventually. Now is the time, how-

ever, to buy the land; it's a valuable corner; there are other people looking at it; and I think you're not likely to get it at a lower price by waiting.'

'I'm quite willing that you should take whatever action you think best,' said Isabel. 'Buy the property, of course, if you think it's the wise thing to do.'

He was disappointed by the indifference of her reply rather than pleased by the evidence it gave of confidence in his judgment.

'If it had been an ordinary year I don't know that I should recommend an additional investment in residential real estate,' he said. 'But your investments have been extraordinarily profitable this year and the outlay that I suggest seems to me well justified.'

'I want you to feel always, Mr. Kendall, that so far as business transactions are concerned I'm entirely willing to abide by your judgment. Whenever it's necessary for me to sign any papers, let me know; otherwise you needn't feel under any obligation to send for me.'

Roger flushed; the rebuke seemed pointed.

'I'm not altogether satisfied with that expression of confidence, Mrs. Ashton,' he said. 'In the first place, I prefer that clients should have some interest in the management of their affairs and some intelligent understanding of them. In the second place, it's uncomfortable to have the feeling that a client's attitude is — well, chilling if not hostile.'

In Isabel's face too, now, the color deepened.

'I'm not aware that I said anything to make you think I am hostile.'

'I can't help feeling, both from the nature of the notes you've sent me during the summer and from your manner to-day, that I no longer have your confidence as I had it when I first undertook this work.'

'But I've just told you, Mr. Kendall, that I have perfect confidence in your judgment on business matters. I want to

give you a free hand in them. I don't see how I could show my confidence more decisively.'

'I will say frankly, Mrs. Ashton, that it seems to me your attitude is governed quite as much by a desire to have as little as possible to do with me as by confidence in my judgment.'

'Is it necessary when people have business relations with each other that they should have social relations too?'

'So far as you and I are concerned, yes. Absolutely.'

Irritation was unmistakable in her short laugh. 'Why should you make that a condition? You don't need any help from me socially.'

'It would be altogether too disagreeable to me to continue doing work that gave me a rather intimate knowledge of certain aspects of your life and at the same time to know that you had a personal aversion for me.'

'Aversion? Can't you understand, Mr. Kendall, why it's painful for me to see you?'

'I know that Mr. Hoyt has talked with you about your husband. I suppose you reproach me for having withheld from you the facts that Mr. Hoyt disclosed.'

'I don't know that I reproach you. I feel that I've been humiliated, and it's natural, isn't it, to want to avoid the persons that I associate with my humiliation?'

'Why should you feel humiliated?'

'Why?' Her eyes flashed indignantly. 'How else could I feel after hearing the truth about my husband's death? And your thinking it was necessary to deceive me — that in itself is mortifying!'

'One reason why I felt it was necessary was in order to keep faith with one who is now dead — not your husband. But one who cared for you too much, Mrs. Ashton, ever to have had a disparaging thought about you.'

'You mean Ben Hampden?'

'Yes. His one thought was, Why should you ever know?

Why should you not be spared the pain of knowing? Your sorrow and suffering would be great enough without that. Perhaps we were wrong, those of us who shared his feeling. But though we deceived you, Mrs. Ashton, it wasn't because we distrusted your fortitude.'

'Perhaps not. But to be pitied to such an extent that I must be lied to — it gives me a feeling of degradation. I can't help wishing to keep forever away from every one who is responsible for my having such a feeling.'

'As I think of Ben, Mrs. Ashton, that's a cruel thing for you to say. It's like repulsing his hovering spirit.'

'I'm not a spiritualist, Mr. Kendall.'

'Neither am I. But as I know how Ben felt about you, I can't help commenting on the heartlessness of your remark.'

She rose, her hazel eyes flashing. 'If we've completed the business for which you summoned me, there's no need of my staying any longer, is there?'

'No, Mrs. Ashton.' His voice as he stood looking unwaveringly at her face sounded to her cold and unfeeling; to himself it had the tonelessness of despair. 'I hope that within two or three days you will notify me who is to take over the management of your affairs.'

'I will let you know just as soon as possible,' she said with stinging emphasis. She turned from him in a manner that forbade him to accompany her to the door. He stood gazing after her with an inexpressible sadness and longing, while she passed out of the room and, as he felt, out of his life forever. Even after she had disappeared he stood motionless, listening to the faint sound of her footsteps, until they died away in the corridor. Then he seated himself again, turned from his desk, and with his hands clasped behind his head, leaned back as if to study the farther wall. Well, he had forced the issue; a little more tact perhaps —! Idle, empty regret, a shattered dream, pain at so unkind a parting — and the

vision of her, radiant in her anger, lovely even in her defiance, was vivid in his mind and heart, intensifying the regret, the sadness, the pain.

He sat as one entranced, still visualizing her image, still hearing her low and vibrant voice, striving to make them permanent in his consciousness even while stricken with the knowledge that the reality of possession for which he had hoped could never be his.

At the sound of some one entering his room and closing his door, he swung sharply about and beheld to his joyful amazement the person who thus filled his thoughts standing again before him.

He started to his feet, aware even before she spoke that her mood had softened.

'I had to come back, Mr. Kendall; I couldn't bear to leave you thinking that I'm really heartless about Ben. Whatever I said that caused you to think that of me, please forget it — for it isn't true.'

She spoke with emotion; her eyes were brighter with unshed tears than they had been a little while before with anger.

'Indeed I knew that you couldn't be heartless,' Roger said. 'I felt that you were unjust to me, and I wasn't above revenging myself when you gave me an opening.'

'I don't want to be unjust to you or to any one,' Isabel answered. 'I've been very unhappy, of course. Mr. Hoyt has done more than any one else to help me. I've written to him several times this summer when I felt I needed help, and his letters gave me just what I needed. The fact that he was somehow able to do that — the person who had told me the truth — may have turned me a little against everybody who had joined in deceiving me. But I want to be reasonable, Mr. Kendall. If you insist on my giving my affairs over to some one else, I shall have to do it, of course. But truly I'd rather not. What is it that you want me to do?'

'To sit down, first of all,' said Roger cheerfully, putting

forward a chair. 'You know, your attitude toward your man of business is so different from that of any other client! People generally feel that when they put their property into the hands of a trustee or agent, they are entitled to come in at any time and have him go into long explanations of every transaction — in fact, that he's at their beck and call at any moment. It ought, I suppose, to be a relief to find one client who isn't so exacting, but I don't want you to go to the opposite extreme. The only point I meant to make was that I can't assume the management of the affairs of any one whose attitude seems unfriendly. I want to feel that you're willing to coöperate, to make suggestions and to enter into consultation from time to time.'

'I'm quite willing, Mr. Kendall. But all the details and arrangements of finance are hard for me to grasp, and very wearisome to me besides. So you mustn't feel that if I don't keep coming in and demanding an accounting, like your other clients, it means I'm unfriendly.'

'Of course not. And I'll try not to impose anything unnecessarily on your attention. It has occurred to me that often you may want to make some gifts for charitable purposes, and I shall always be glad to investigate any appeals or help you in any way that I can. In fact, if you will let me say so, I think it would be wise for you not to make any large gifts without consulting me.'

'That is one of the things I talked with Mr. Hoyt about yesterday. I felt that he would have suggestions — and I found that his principal interest is in seeing that deserving persons get help — especially young people, whose families are having a hard struggle to give them an education and who can't quite earn their own way. He seemed to know of so many cases! I thought — and I should like to have your opinion on this — I should change over from Saint Paul's to Saint Stephen's. I'm not really needed in Saint Paul's, and I believe I could help in a parish that is not at all well-to-do.

I wondered if your father would feel hurt if I made such a change?'

'I suppose all clergymen are human enough to regret it when a member of the congregation allies himself with another church. But if you explain to Father why you're making the change he ought not to feel hurt.'

'It's partly a feeling that I should like to be of some help to Mr. Hoyt, since he has been of help to me,' she said. 'But I remember times when I seemed to get help from your father too. I don't want to appear ungrateful or disloyal. Yet shouldn't one go where one sees the greatest possibility of being useful?'

'Yes, there's no question about that. I have to admit, though, that Father is somewhat touchy, and he may not see the question just as I do. That's not a reason for you to alter your decision; it's just a warning that in talking with him you may not find him quite so readily amenable as you might wish him to be.'

'I'm sorry if I'm going to do something that will hurt his feelings. How soon do you expect him to come home?'

'The latter part of next week.'

'Perhaps I shall be cowardly and not go near him at all!'

'Then there's no question but that you'll hear from him,' said Roger, smiling. 'If he's the man I think he is, he won't be wholly indifferent to your movements.'

'Well,' she said with a sigh, 'don't talk to him about it; I think he'd better hear of it first from me. — Did you like Mr. Hoyt's sermon yesterday?'

'It seemed to me a little — well, a little too lugubrious. I'm not at all sure that to think daily about death, as he advised, is a good thing for anybody.'

'I had somewhat the same feeling. I suppose, though,' she said musingly, 'it's because we can't either of us think about it with quite the same confidence that he seems able to. When you talk with him, he doesn't seem morbid at all,

or despondent, or anything of that sort. I really believe that somehow thinking every day about death has been a good thing for him.'

'Perhaps. But I hope that life will spare me the necessity.'

'I sincerely hope it will. I should like, though, to be able to think as he does about death. I believe that's why he fills his church; he is making people able to think that way. And that's the other reason why I'm going to his church. I hope to get something that I need, as well as to give. — Well!' She rose and changed at once to a lighter tone. 'You'll think I'm a typical client after all — feeling privileged to sit and waste your time to any extent! But perhaps you'll believe now, anyway, that I'm really not unfriendly.'

'I assure you that my time has been well spent in making that discovery,' he answered.

She gave him her hand. 'I shall always be glad to see you at my house. And I shall always come obediently to your office whenever I'm summoned.'

He escorted her, on this departure, not merely to the door of the outer office but also along the corridor to the elevator, where he waited until the car had taken her in its downward plunge.

Miss Colver, his secretary, sitting in the outer office, reflected that she had never before seen him treat any client with such distinguished consideration.

XX

Bishop Addison's death caused Dr. Kendall to return a week earlier than he had planned. For more than a year the Bishop's health had been failing, but he had performed the duties of his office even to the last; on the Sunday before his death he had preached a sermon and had ordained a priest. The next morning he collapsed while he was at work in his study; he recovered consciousness only to murmur drowsily, 'There is still much to be done'; and he died within a few hours.

Dr. Kendall was on the golf links when the message was delivered to him. That evening he started on the homeward journey, leaving his wife and Laura to follow the next day.

To Roger, who met him at the station, his demeanor indicated a temperate sadness. 'He was a dear man, a dear man,' Dr. Kendall said, in response to Roger's expression of regret. 'We were very close to each other, very close. Our minds always ran along together.'

Driving away from the station, Roger said, 'I understand that the funeral is to be at Saint Paul's. Are you to conduct it?'

'Yes. I am very much gratified, of course, that Mrs. Addison should have asked me — though I can hardly doubt it would have been the bishop's own wish. Not only because of our intimacy, but because Saint Paul's had been his church; he was rector of it, you know, when he was made bishop.'

'Everything points to you as next in succession, Father.'

'Yes, it almost seems so. The bishop, who always looked ahead, intimated to many persons his hope that when the time came I should be the one chosen to take up his work. It would be in many ways a heavy burden, but I feel able to

assume it if I am called. — I should think Adelaide might have interested herself sufficiently to meet me on my arrival.'

'You know she has to lie round a good deal.'

'Of course I shouldn't want her to attempt any exertion that would be a risk. But I should hardly have supposed that driving to the station would tax her strength.'

'There's always a chance that a train from a distance may be late, and standing about and waiting is fatiguing.'

'When your mother was in a similar condition she never thought of giving up her ordinary daily activities — at least not until a short time before the event. But I suppose that medical science is far more advanced nowadays.' Dr. Kendall's tone implied skepticism, if not sarcasm. 'I hope anyway that Adelaide is in good health.'

'She seems to be.'

'And Francis — how is he getting on? Making rapid progress towards the managing editorship?' Dr. Kendall's tone was now satirical as well as skeptical.

'He's doing good work. You needn't have any doubt about your son-in-law. He has ability and character. He will arrive.'

'Possibly, possibly. — Ha, it begins to look as if we were arriving ourselves. And home is a welcome sight after so sad and wearisome a journey.'

The housekeeper held the front door open as Dr. Kendall came up the veranda steps. She curtseyed at his bluff greeting, 'How are you, Mrs. Jones — how are you, Jane?'; the second part being addressed to the robust and comely daughter who stood as if fulfilling the function of a guidepost, by the door of the library. 'I hope you will find the library and your chamber all in good order, sir,' said Mrs. Jones. 'And the Major's chamber also; I hope you will find it all in good order, sir.'

'Ah!' said Dr. Kendall, entering the library and relaxing at once in one of the large leather chairs. 'It is indeed a

comfort to be at home! I feel really tired. A little whiskey and soda wouldn't be altogether amiss, eh, Roger?'

'I'm quite willing to join you.' Roger drew out his bunch of keys.

'On second thought, perhaps I'd better not.' Dr Kendall spoke reluctantly. 'I must call on Mrs. Addison this afternoon; it would be rather unbecoming —. I think I shall have to depend solely on the invigorating effects of a bath.' He rose and stretched, flexing his biceps and expanding his large chest. 'You'll drive me over to Mrs. Addison's, Roger, after I come down?'

'I'm at your service for the rest of the day.'

The call on Mrs. Addison was of some duration. Roger sat in the car and indolently let his eyes and mind wander. The house, a wide brick house with a flat front and a flat roof, stood back a few feet from the sidewalk; on each side of the gravel path from the iron gate to the front door was a border of candytuft and asters, now in full bloom; some of the asters were of just the same shade of purple as the ribbon fastened to the wreath beside the door.

Roger meditated on the irony of his father's position at the moment — summoned to condole with the sorrowing wife over the event that had opened the way to the fulfillment of the desire dearest to his heart. It was not to be expected that he could forget all thought of personal advantage in his emotions of sympathy and grief, yet he would no doubt give Mrs. Addison reason to feel that her husband's friend mourned his death only less than one of his own family could do. And what better service could a friend render at such a time than conveying just that intimation?

When finally Dr. Kendall emerged from the house, his air of gravity and importance seemed intensified.

'The arrangements have all been allowed to await my arrival,' he said. 'Mrs. Addison wishes me to be responsible for them. I shall have to keep late hours to-night.'

'Perhaps I can be of some assistance.'

'Yes, I shall need your help; I must send messages at once to all the clergy in the diocese, urging their attendance. It may be difficult to seat them all in the chancel, and those bishops who will come, especially since Mrs. Addison wishes to have the full choir — but I shall have to manage it somehow. Bishop Addison's secretary is to be at my house at eight o'clock with addresses and other data.'

The pressure of his duties did not prevent Dr. Kendall from lingering over the excellent dinner that Mrs. Jones had cooked and that her daughter served, or from taking in leisurely fashion a glass of port afterward. Promptly at eight o'clock, however, he passed from the dining-room into the room where the secretary was waiting — a stout, florid, middle-aged woman with a face which, had Dr. Kendall taken the trouble to observe it, denoted character.

'My son, Major Kendall, Miss Crane,' he said. 'I have telephoned for my secretary, Miss Wilcox, and she will be here in a few minutes. You have the list of addresses?'

'Yes, Dr. Kendall.'

'Do you feel able to stay and help us for some time this evening? I fear that you have been overburdened in the last twenty-four hours.'

'No, I should like to help. Any last thing that I can do for the dear Bishop —' Miss Crane was unable to complete the sentence.

'Yes, Miss Crane, we all of us feel just as you do,' said Dr. Kendall sympathetically. 'I want to send a telegram to every clergyman in the diocese urging him to be at Saint Paul's at two o'clock day after to-morrow, in his vestments. And have you the names of the six priests in this diocese who were the last to be ordained by Bishop Addison?'

'Yes, they are in this book, Dr. Kendall.'

'Good. I am going to ask them to be the bearers. I will write out two forms of message, one the general invitation to

participate, the other the special for the six most recently ordained. And, Roger, you can see to having them dispatched this evening.'

'I shall have to make a copy of the lists, Dr. Kendall. These are not in such shape that they could be turned over to the telegraph operator.'

'There's a typewriter on that table, Miss Crane.' He checked her as she was moving toward it. 'Before you start in on that work I should like to have you suggest any names of persons fitted to serve as honorary pallbearers that may occur to you. Eight of the most prominent laymen of the diocese should be asked to serve, and they shouldn't of course all be from the same place. I suggested to Mrs. Addison that my brother-in-law Mr. Markham might be selected as the local representative; she approved of that suggestion. Mr. Hayden from Williamsburg, Mr. McKenzie from Burford, and Mr. Inglis from Elton I should choose without question — and Mrs. Addison mentioned them especially. Your knowledge of the affairs of the diocese may assist me in selecting the other four, Miss Crane.'

Unfortunately the names that Miss Crane suggested did not meet with Dr. Kendall's approval.

'Good men, of course, and no doubt active in the work of the church, but hardly of enough distinction — somewhat too lacking in prestige, I should say. The office of honorary pallbearer on this occasion calls for a man of rather striking eminence in the community. I won't trouble you further about this matter, Miss Crane; if you will be good enough now to make a copy of those lists. — Roger, you might call up Mr. Warren for me, please; when you get him I'll speak with him.'

He set himself at once to draft the telegrams, while Miss Crane plied the typewriter and Roger consulted the telephone directory and put in the call. Presently Roger announced, 'Mr. Warren's on the line, Father.' and passed the receiver to him.

'Yes, Mr. Warren; this is Dr. Kendall. — Yes, very well, thank you. I am making the arrangements for the Bishop's funeral; could you find it convenient to stop in at my office some time to-morrow morning? I should like to have you take charge of the ushers, if you will. — Yes, that's very good; nine o'clock then.'

He turned to Roger. 'It will be a great task, making out a list of those for whom seats should be reserved. It is of course not only relatives and close personal friends that shall have to be considered. — Miss Crane, may I count on receiving from you before noon to-morrow a list of the relatives and friends for whom Mrs. Addison would wish to have places reserved — and in the order that she would prefer?'

'I will try to have it for you, Dr. Kendall.'

'Good.' He spoke absently, again absorbed in the task of composing the telegram. His secretary arrived, bringing the list of pewholders at Saint Paul's; he bade her check on it those who by reason of old association might expect to have special provision made for them at the funeral. 'You might put your mind to work on the question of honorary pallbearers,' he said to Roger. 'The most representative men from different sections of the diocese — members of the church, of course, but especially leaders in the life of the community.'

'I might think of various prominent citizens, but I know nothing about their church affiliations,' said Roger.

'Put down whatever names you think of; I can have their church affiliations looked up, if they're otherwise eligible.'

The telephone rang; Roger answered.

'It's Adelaide,' he reported, and again handed the instrument to his father.

'Yes, Adelaide,' said Dr. Kendall. 'How are you? — Yes, I rather thought you'd be at the station when I arrived, but no matter. — Anyway I'm glad to know that it wasn't

illness that kept you away. — No, I'm afraid not; I shall be very much occupied until after the funeral; all the preparations have been left to me. In fact, I'm very busy just at this minute — have several persons in the room working with me. — All right; glad to have heard your voice again; hope to see you soon. — What's that? — Yes, your mother and Laura will arrive at three to-morrow. — Yes, I'll tell them; they'll probably be able to go and see you at once. — All right; good-bye.'

In a short time Dr. Kendall finished his draft of the messages that he wished to have sent. 'I'll entrust this to you, Roger,' he said. 'When Miss Crane has copied off the list of addresses for you, I wish you'd drive to the Western Union office and file the telegrams for immediate dispatch.'

He turned to his secretary. 'Now, Miss Wilcox, I'll look over those names, if you please.' He ran his eyes hastily down the columns. 'You've checked a good many more, I fancy, than we can reserve seats for; I shall have to go over them carefully with Mr. Warren in the morning. — And now, Roger, this question of honorary pallbearers; have you any suggestions?'

Among the possibilities that Roger mentioned, the only one that his father took kindly to was the president of the State University. 'Yes, President Turner and the Bishop were on very friendly terms, as I daresay you know, Miss Crane.'

'I shouldn't have said that they were at all intimate,' replied Miss Crane with a shade of asperity, and without interrupting her work at the typewriter.

'Intimacy is not the first requisite. It almost seems as if the Governor of the State should, *ex-officio*, be asked to head the group; unfortunately, the man is a Baptist, and to include him would be rather inappropriate. We've made a good beginning, anyway — five out of eight selected already.

Miss Wilcox, you might try to get each of these four on the telephone for me; you'll have to put in long distance calls for them, but every detail that can be settled now is so much to the good.'

By the time that Dr. Kendall had secured the assent of the four, Miss Crane had completed her work of copying the lists.

'Now, Miss Wilcox, if you will make a copy of each of these telegrams that I have written out and then pin it to the proper list, so as to prevent the risk of confusion in sending. I'm greatly obliged to you, Miss Crane, for your kindness in coming this evening and giving me your help. Roger, you will take Miss Crane and Miss Wilcox home before going to the telegraph office.'

'Certainly,' Roger said. Miss Crane protested that she could go by trolley car as well as not; there was a certain stiffness in her manner of which Roger was aware, though his father evidently did not notice it. 'By no means, Miss Crane, by no means.' And Roger was so cordial in his insistence that she decided to forego the pleasure of departing with a show of feeling. Nevertheless she had her own opinion, which she did not propose to keep to herself, of the worldly considerations that were obviously influencing Dr. Kendall in making the arrangements. She had herself been fully in Bishop Addison's confidence. She knew that Bishop Addison had hoped Dr. Kendall would be his successor, and she had therefore been favorably disposed toward Dr. Kendall's candidacy. But now she was sure of what she had only up to this time suspected — that Bishop Addison's admiration for Dr. Kendall had been based chiefly on a recognition of the fact that Dr. Kendall possessed qualities in which he himself was deficient — aggressive energy, executive force, unquestioning self-confidence; the Bishop's very mildness and sweetness of nature and his preoccupation with the spiritual side of his work had caused him to overvalue the qualities of the strong man of

affairs, to magnify unduly the advantage to the diocese of selecting such a man for its head.

It never would have occurred to Dr. Kendall that a secretary might be capable of independent thought. His own secretary was not capable of it.

Miss Wilcox asked if there was nothing else that she could do that evening to help him.

'Nothing, thank you. I'm going to call up Mr. Harbison after you go and arrange about the music; and then I shall really prefer to be alone in order to think out various details. By to-morrow morning I shall have a lot of definite work for you to do. Good-night. Good-night, Miss Crane; thank you again for coming.'

After leaving Miss Wilcox at her door, Roger, who had been troubled by a perception of the ill-feeling that his father's course had provoked in Miss Crane, attempted conciliatory measures.

'My father's very anxious that everything should be done to insure the utmost dignity in the conduct of the funeral,' he said. 'I think that's the controlling idea in his mind in making the arrangements.'

'Bishop Addison was the simplest of men,' replied Miss Crane.

'But I suppose, considering the office that he held, the ceremony ought to have a certain — well, I can't find the word. Not pomp exactly, but you know what I mean.'

'It's the man that's dead, not the office, Mr. Kendall. I feel that it isn't the kind of funeral that Bishop Addison would have chosen for himself.'

Roger realized that he had not succeeded in mending matters. He parted from Miss Crane, however, with a certain feeling of sympathy and respect.

The funeral was duly impressive. Following the choir in their processional there entered eight bishops and forty of the clergy — some of them wearing with their vestments the

colored hood and robe of their doctorate. They passed into the chancel beyond the roses that were banked high on either side, and then formed themselves in two rows in front of the communion rail, facing the congregation. Dr. Kendall stood out before them at the top of the chancel steps; when the processional hymn had ended he advanced down the aisle, saying, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' and at the door met the funeral procession. Slowly the six young clergymen bearing the purple draped coffin followed him up the aisle; reverently they set down their burden. Dr. Kendall read the service without elocutionary flourish; the choir sang 'Lead, Kindly Light'; during the closing prayer the sunlight broke through the clouds and streamed in at the chancel windows.

There had been one trifling oversight, which was never brought to Dr. Kendall's notice. In the list of the personal friends of Bishop Addison that Miss Crane had compiled in accordance with Dr. Kendall's request, she had modestly refrained from inserting her own name. Arriving after all the seats along the main aisle had been filled, she gave her name to the usher who approached her. He studied his typewritten list for a moment. 'Bishop Addison's secretary,' Miss Crane ventured to suggest. 'Oh, yes, of course,' said the usher, and offered her his arm. She realized as he stood for a moment gazing vaguely up the aisle that his response had merely been tactful. There had been no seat reserved for Bishop Addison's secretary; he was searching desperately for a place in which to bestow her. He found one, far back in the church and on one of the side aisles.

Two days later she wrote to her brother, the Reverend George Crane, who had a parish in a small town about fifty miles away:

Dear George:

I was sorry not to have more than a glimpse of you when you came on for the funeral. There is much that I want to say to you when we meet, but as that time is uncertain and I am already al-

most boiling over, I will try to put down a little of what I have been thinking and feeling.

As you know, Bishop Addison made no secret to me of his hope that when he retired — as he intended to do next April — Dr. Kendall would succeed him. I have never seen very much of Dr. Kendall, and I had never been especially attracted toward him. I ventured to ask Bishop Addison once why he had such admiration for him; apparently he regarded Dr. Kendall as a tremendously able executive, a great man for raising money, a man of the world as well as a man of the church — in short, it seemed to me, Bishop Addison felt he would make a good bishop mainly because he was such a different type from himself! The business side of a bishop's work always was irksome to him, and he had come to feel — quite mistakenly, I believe — that the diocese needed a man with more talent than he had for that kind of thing.

Now I was in a position to study Dr. Kendall when he was making the arrangements for the funeral, and though I don't like to do anything to prevent the fulfillment of what I know was Bishop Addison's wish, I must do all that I can — for I am sure that for the diocese to elect Dr. Kendall bishop would be nothing less than a calamity. The man is arrogant; he caters only to those elements in the church that he regards as socially important. He took all the funeral arrangements into his own hands, saw to it that the persons to whom special consideration was to be given were those of wealth and fashion, slighted the claims of some of Bishop Addison's intimate friends, chose the pallbearers without the slightest regard for fitness; not one of them was at all close to Bishop Addison, and I know that of one of them, that rich manufacturer from Sharpsville, Benjamin Burling, the Bishop had the utmost disapproval. He declined to meet him at dinner; he said to me, 'Burling's generous and public-spirited, but it's well known that he's a man of the loosest morals. I can't drive him out of the church for that reason, I can't prevent his making donations to the support of his church, but I can at least show my personal feeling about him.' And then to see that man an honorary pallbearer! That is merely one illustration of the complete worldliness by which Dr. Kendall is dominated.

My association with Bishop Addison has given me some insight

into the character of the various clergymen in the diocese and into the work that they have been doing. There is one man who is of very much the same type as Bishop Addison; I think you know him, Mr. Hoyt, the rector of Saint Stephen's. He would make a splendid bishop. Moreover, he is a war hero — was decorated for bravery. That wouldn't handicap him at all as a candidate. Do consider this suggestion — and, anyway, when you go to the diocesan convention do everything you can to prevent its being stampeded for Dr. Kendall.

Affectionately

ELEANOR

XXI

THE day before that on which the funeral took place, Dr. Kendall had been too much occupied to be able to meet his wife and daughter at the station or to receive them on their arrival at home. He had been warranted in thinking that with Roger to welcome them his own absence would not be greatly deplored. When he returned to his house that evening, it was to find his wife less disposed to listen to his account of his interesting activities than to reproach him for what she seemed to regard as his neglect of Adelaide. She and Laura had gone to see Adelaide immediately after their arrival, had found her far from well, and in spite of her cheerfulness grieved and hurt by her father's indifference, his casual manner in speaking with her over the telephone — and it had not been he who had initiated that conversation although it was he who had terminated it. Nothing, not even the urgency of a bishop's funeral, could excuse a father for treating his daughter in such a way at such a time.

Mrs. Kendall spoke with severity, and in the presence of both Laura and Roger. Dr. Kendall protested warmly; if Adelaide had intimated that she really wished to see him, that a visit from him would do her the slightest good, he would have dismissed all other considerations from his mind, he would have gone to her at once, even at the risk of leaving in confusion the important matters that had been committed to his charge.

Mrs. Kendall said, more mildly, 'I do realize, Damon, that you have a good deal on your mind. But try to show Adelaide some special attention now — more than you've been in the habit of doing. It would please her and help her.'

'I certainly shall do what I can; I'm sorry if she felt hurt.'

Indeed, the solemn office with which he was charged chast-

ened his spirit even while he contemplated with serene happiness the certainty of advancement that now awaited him. When he stood by the grave the next day and pronounced the final words, he was suddenly assailed by the thought that his own time could not now be very long, that there could not be many years in which to enjoy the honor and perform the service of which his old friend had been relieved by death.

He departed from the cemetery filled with a yearning to be kindly and benign, venerated for his office, beloved for himself, reaping rewards and scattering blessings in full and equal measure in the brief span of years before him.

An hour later he arrived at Adelaide's door, bearing candy and roses.

The maid ushered him through a tiny hall into the small living-room, where Adelaide, in a pink tea-gown, flesh-colored stockings, and patent leather slippers with silver buckles, was lying on a sofa, smoking and reading a novel.

'Father, you old dear!' she exclaimed, as he approached, bearing the roses in one hand, the box of candy in the other. She made a motion to rise, but he said, 'No, no; lie still, Adelaide; your mother has told me how important it is for you to rest.' He bent and kissed her; then he placed his offerings in her hands.

She called to the maid to fill a vase with water, and when it had been brought and placed on the table beside her she arranged the flowers in it herself, commenting meanwhile on their beauty and his thoughtfulness in bringing them. In his softened mood her appreciation seemed touching. Glancing about her little room he felt sorry for her rather than indignant with her for having so perversely rejected all her opportunities for happiness. How sad to see her cramped in a wretched little apartment, with a nondescript young man for a husband, when she might have been Leonard Warder's wife, living comfortably and entertaining handsomely in the fine old Warder house! Poor girl!

'You're not smoking too much, Adelaide?' he asked.

'No; just enough to keep myself pleasantly soothed and comfortable. You look as if you'd had a good summer, Father.'

'Yes, quiet, restful — plenty of golf.'

'And now to come back to — I was going to say such an excitement, but that's hardly a proper way to speak of poor Bishop Addison's death. But of course, it is an excitement for you, isn't it?'

'You've heard, have you, that there's a chance of my being elected bishop?'

'Francis says that in the "Times" office your election is considered certain. And newspaper men always seem to have an uncanny way of knowing what's going to happen.'

'I hope he's right; I should enjoy the honor and I think I could be of service.' Dr. Kendall felt that the nondescript young man had after all a certain intelligence; he warmed to him somewhat for having been the bearer of such good news.

'I might have been willing to postpone my wedding as you wanted me to do,' said Adelaide, 'if I could have known that in a few months I would be married by the bishop. Anyway it's nice to think that Roger and Laura will both have that honor.'

'I hope they will — though they haven't either of them intimated any intentions as yet.'

'I've received intimations, though not from them,' said Adelaide. 'Didn't an old beau of mine journey all the way to the Cape to see Laura?'

'Ah!' exclaimed Dr. Kendall, suddenly enlightened. 'Leonard Warder did spend a few days with us. But it hadn't occurred to me —'

'Oh, yes, Leonard's just as fickle as any other suitor that's cruelly treated. And he's ever so much more in love with Laura than he was with me — ever so much! He came to me the other day bleating like a lamb and begging for my assist-

ance — quite shamelessly. Laura hadn't encouraged him as much as he had hoped. I told him not to be silly; Laura's bound to punish him for having been so stupid as to make her his second choice. But I assured him it would all come out right in the end. It will, Father dear, if you will kindly not try to urge Laura into it.'

'I don't see why a little judicious advice from me should be an obstacle.'

'Indeed, it would be; every girl wants to have the privilege of making up her own mind. So if you really don't want to miss your second chance of having Leonard for a son-in-law, don't put any pressure on Laura — or try to guide her.'

'I daresay you know what you're talking about, Adelaide. But in my day parental influence counted for more than it seems to now.'

'Yes, and probably people made just as many mistakes. Only it was the fashion then to cover them up instead of admitting them frankly and taking measures to correct them, as people do now. Oh, my goodness!' Adelaide sat up suddenly with a look of consternation on her face.

'What is it? Are you sick?' Dr. Kendall rose in anxiety.

'No. But what I just said — why, it made me realize for the first time that you won't be able to marry Roger after all!'

'What in the world are you talking about?'

'Why, I think it's just a question of a short time before Roger will tell us of his engagement to Sally Winant. You know she's got her divorce. And shortly after she got it Roger bought a farm in Bolton, and he's putting an addition on the house, and planning to spend his week-ends there — and considering how much in love he was with Sally before she married Spencer Winant, it's all too obvious for words.'

'Hm!' Dr. Kendall frowned, and sank back into his chair. 'Planning to marry a woman who's divorced her husband, is he! It makes no difference that she's the innocent party; sentiment in the Church is too strong against the marriage of di-

vorced persons; I couldn't possibly solemnize such a marriage.'

'An odious, unjust, illiberal sentiment it is too!' exclaimed Adelaide. 'It does seem as if there were a lot of old fuddy-duddies in control who are bent on driving all reasoning and reasonable people out of the Church.'

'Adelaide, you mustn't speak with such disrespect.'

'But I don't respect them. They're deficient both in intellect and in human sympathy.'

'I shall have to leave at once if you insist on continuing in that strain,' said Dr. Kendall with asperity. 'I realize of course that your condition —'

'Oh, my condition doesn't affect my common sense,' Adelaide struck in tartly. 'But since the subject is disagreeable to you, Father, I won't pursue it. Only it does seem hard on Roger and poor Sally — both of them perfectly blameless and perfectly good church members.'

'I will concede that. — Yes, it's very unfortunate. If I should happen to be bishop and Roger has to be married outside the Church — but I don't know really why that should affect my influence. In every other respect the match would be a most suitable one. Sally's a charming person; there's no better family in the State than the Pendletons; she will bring her husband a comfortable fortune — not that Roger would be influenced by that, of course — or need be — but it's quite appropriate — quite appropriate.' He sat revolving his thumbs and knitting his brows, weighing in his mind the advantages and disadvantages of such an alliance, while Adelaide, reclining again upon her sofa, watched him with amused yet not unsympathetic eyes. 'If it must be, the question is whether it would be more advisable to hasten the event, so that it shall take place before the diocesan convention meets, or to delay it until after I am elected — assuming that I'm going to be elected. It's possible that such a marriage, occurring just before the convention, might have a bad effect on some of the delegates; they might argue that it had made

me less available than some one who hadn't had such a forbidden happening in his immediate family. On the other hand, if it should occur after my election, it might expose me to some criticism — quite unjustly, of course; but there would be some who would take pleasure in commenting on the inappropriateness of such an event at the very outset of my administration —'

'I think, Father, you can't do much about it,' said Adelaide. 'You'll have to leave it to the two principals to set the date.'

'I must admit, Adelaide, you've given me something to think about. Anyway, it's not altogether unpleasant; except for the technical complication, both matches would be most appropriate. I should like to promote them. I certainly hope that Laura won't let any foolish pique stand between her and happiness.'

'Don't try to promote anything except your candidacy as bishop,' Adelaide said. 'So far as Laura and Roger are concerned, you'd much better seem not to be aware of what is going on.'

'My dear, you can count on my being tactful. — And how is Francis?'

'Speaking of tact!' said Adelaide, and laughed. 'Oh, he works hard and doesn't complain too much. He's helped Uncle Robert in preparing a couple of speeches; Uncle Robert has said awfully nice things about him.'

'That's good — though if Francis is to succeed in journalism, he'd better concentrate on it.'

'Perhaps through Uncle Robert the way will be opened to something more interesting and profitable.'

'Looking for a change already, is he? I wish him luck.'

'The same to you, Father.'

Dr. Kendall rose, remarking, 'It's the dignity of the office that I think of, Adelaide, not the frills. Now I hope you're going to be careful of yourself; keep serene mentally. Don't allow yourself to get over-excited or irritated. I'll come in and

see you often; you really understand, I hope, how impossible it was for me to visit you any earlier.'

'Oh, yes; you needn't have me on your mind. I shall be getting about more actively in a little while.'

He kissed her and moved toward the door; as he opened it, he said, 'Remember me to Francis,' and congratulated himself upon that kindly afterthought.

Sitting in the taxicab, he brooded over the singular impulses that caused his children to enter into marriages of such a character that it was either difficult or impossible for him to officiate at them. Only the marriage that Laura was likely to make could give him unmixed satisfaction. The news of the step that Roger was contemplating was really rather disquieting. Not that the proposed alliance was at all to be deplored, like Adelaide's marriage; on the contrary it had in Dr. Kendall's view every element that was necessary to insure the complete happiness of both parties. And yet the consequences might be damaging to his own career. A young woman who had so recently divorced her husband — were Roger to marry her at about the time of the diocesan convention or shortly before it — there might be a hum of disapproval throughout the diocese that would have serious repercussions. But there was not much need to worry; Roger and Sally would recognize the delicacy of the situation and be willing to delay not merely their marriage but the announcement of their intentions until after the election. And once that was happily decided, the new bishop would have little to fear from whatever criticism his son's unconventional marriage might receive.

So Dr. Kendall sat back, comfortable in mind and body, and with emotions of benevolence still swelling about his heart. These directed themselves to the church of which he had been rector for ten years. Driving past it on his way home, he felt that he should like to do something for it that would make it a more perfect and beautiful thing when he handed it over to his successor. The grounds in which it and

the parish house adjoining it stood ought to be enclosed by a wall of handsome masonry, with a dignified gateway; there was something raw and unfinished in the effect, as they lay open to the sidewalk. Such a wall, he knew, would have been provided by the parish had not the war created a sentiment that any expenditure for purely ornamental purposes was improper. Now Dr. Kendall resolved that one of his last acts as rector should be to raise funds and make provision for a wall and gateway of red stone that should be in keeping with the architecture of the edifice. He would himself make a large contribution, and the remainder of the money that was needed he would obtain from a few of the more wealthy supporters of the church. It would not be wholly his gift and it would not be a memorial that would bear his name, but he was sure that no other token of his regard that he could bestow would be more appreciated by the congregation or have equal artistic value.

XXII

THREE Sundays had passed since Dr. Kendall's return to the city, and Isabel Ashton had not yet communicated to him her decision to give up her connection with Saint Paul's. Although she was always resolute enough in meeting a disagreeable crisis when it had to be faced, she was not one of those who find that the easiest way to get an unpleasant thing done is to have it speedily over with; she procrastinated and longed for some avenue of escape, even while knowing that there could not possibly be one. Especially did she feel that she needed time to fortify herself for the interview with Dr. Kendall, whose pertinacity and dominating personality she quite dreaded to oppose. She hoped that he had failed to note her absence; she wondered how long she could remain absent without being called to account.

One evening she was summoned to the telephone to speak to one whom the maid reported as Mr. Williamson. He explained that he was the senior warden of Saint Stephen's and that he should like to lay before Mrs. Ashton a matter of importance to the church. He could call upon her that evening if she would see him.

Half an hour later there entered to her in the library where she had been reading, a slight, stoop-shouldered man with a red beard, thin sandy hair, and deep-sunk, thoughtful eyes. She recognized him as one who took up the offertory each Sunday at Saint Stephen's.

'I'm very glad to see you, Mr. Williamson,' she said. 'Do sit down by the fire; it's almost like a December evening, isn't it?'

He took the chair that she indicated. 'I appreciate your letting me come here to talk with you, Mrs. Ashton. A suggestion that has been made to some of us at Saint Stephen's

has got us quite excited. We felt we should like to know how it might strike you.'

'I'm such a very new parishioner,' said Isabel. 'I can hardly think my opinion on anything that concerns the parish could be very valuable.'

'That's one reason why we think it would be. A clergyman in this diocese who's an old friend of mine — he and I went to school together — has written to me to ask how the people of Saint Stephen's would feel if there were an attempt made to have Mr. Hoyt elected bishop to succeed Bishop Addison. He wanted to know if they would work enthusiastically for Mr. Hoyt as a candidate. Everybody that I've talked with agrees that we would all support him enthusiastically and be all broken up if he should be elected. But he's set us an example, and we can't be selfish and consider just ourselves. So I've replied to Mr. Crane that the people of Saint Stephen's will be absolutely with him in any campaign for Mr. Hoyt. I hope we can count on you, Mrs. Ashton?'

'Most certainly,' said Isabel. Her eyes were sparkling. 'I think he's just the man to be bishop.'

'I'm glad you feel as the rest of us do. And we want to start a quiet sort of movement now to make him better known throughout the diocese, and get people to thinking of him as a candidate. The thought occurred to me that you may have some friends who are influential in the church, people likely either to be delegates to the convention or to be close to some of those who will be delegates, and that you might be willing to do some missionary work among them. Perhaps bring them to hear Mr. Hoyt preach. If not that, at least remind them of his war record, and urge them to consider whether such a man mightn't well be entrusted at this time with the office.'

'Of course I shall be glad to advertise him to all my friends. Though I suspect he won't like to be advertised. Does he know that this movement has been started?'

'No, we're trying very hard to keep him from hearing any-

thing about it. He's sure to learn of it before a great while, but by that time we may have made such headway that whatever disinclination he may have towards being a candidate can be overcome. We hope to be in a position to say to him, "'The people of the diocese want you, and it's your duty to serve.'' It would be fatal if he felt that he was being pushed forward as a candidate.'

'It would be a splendid thing for the church to have such a man as bishop,' said Isabel. 'But I can't help feeling a little sorry. I've just started in at Saint Stephen's for the sake of hearing him. It will be pretty hard to get adjusted to anybody else.'

'It will be even harder for us who have been with him for years,' said Williamson. 'But I'm sure we none of us would wish to stand in the way of his advancement.'

'No. I shall do everything I can to make votes for him; you may be sure of that.'

Immediately after Mr. Williamson had gone she seated herself at her desk and wrote letters to a number of her friends expressing the hope that they would coöperate with her in creating sentiment favorable to the election of Mr. Hoyt as the next bishop of the diocese. She hesitated somewhat when she undertook to account for her special interest, but at last she incorporated in each letter mention of the fact that Mr. Hoyt, who had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery, had been the chaplain of her husband's regiment. She added that although this fact was enough to enlist her interest in him, her conviction of his qualifications for the office was based on the character of the sermons that she had heard him preach, on his personality as she had been given some slight opportunity to observe it, and on the devotion that he had inspired in the people of his parish.

In writing these letters, some of which were to go to members of the Saint Paul's congregation, she was quite unaware

that Dr. Kendall aspired to succeed Bishop Addison. Until Mr. Williamson had come to talk with her, she had not happened to hear any discussion of candidates for the vacant office. In advocating Hoyt's election, it did not occur to her that she was working actively against some other candidate. She was an ardent partisan, but she had no thought of putting herself in a position of definite hostility to anybody.

She posted the letters the next morning. A few hours later Dr. Kendall's secretary telephoned to her and asked if she would make an appointment with him for that afternoon. Isabel had a momentary sinking of the heart; the acknowledgment of her withdrawal from Saint Paul's could be no longer delayed.

At five o'clock Dr. Kendall appeared, hearty, jocular, playful, with an approving glance and word for the tea-table that was already set out.

'I know your guilty conscience tells you I've come to chide you, Mrs. Ashton,' he said, as he settled back comfortably with the cup of tea that she handed to him. 'No one need hope at Saint Paul's that his absences go unnoticed. But never mind; I won't reproach you. I've got something much worse in store for you — a sort of penance.'

'You'll probably think I deserve it all the more when you hear the full extent of my backsliding, Dr. Kendall.' Isabel betrayed her nervousness; she was slipping her ring up and down on her finger; she went on rapidly: 'I've hardly been able to get my courage up to the point of telling you about it. You know Mr. Hoyt, at Saint Stephen's, was the chaplain of my husband's regiment. That gave me an interest in him, and while you were away I went to hear him preach. And when I realized the kind of parish in which he was working — so different from Saint Paul's — people not at all well-to-do — I felt that perhaps I could be of much more real help in a parish like that than in one like Saint Paul's. It seemed to me as if I really might be needed there. Of course you'll

understand, Dr. Kendall, that my leaving Saint Paul's isn't in any sense due to a feeling that you weren't giving me help. It's due to a feeling that I can give help more effectively at Saint Stephen's. And then, as I said, the fact that Mr. Hoyt was the chaplain in my husband's regiment — for that reason —' Conscious of the disingenuousness of this last reason, she failed to complete the sentence which had been wrung from her unwilling lips by a perception that in spite of her careful explanation Dr. Kendall felt deeply hurt.

'I'm sorry that you should have jumped at the conclusion that you could be more useful in some other parish than Saint Paul's,' he said. He put down his teacup and spoke earnestly. 'The very fact that I've come to see you this afternoon — the errand I've come on — is in itself a proof that you're quite mistaken in thinking that your help isn't needed — urgently needed — in Saint Paul's. It is true that our congregation is, comparatively speaking, well-to-do. And yet there are really very few members of it who are able or willing to make large gifts from time to time to the church. And our church is eminently dependent for its usefulness upon occasional large gifts. It has a tradition of dignity and beauty and leadership to maintain, and the works of charity that it carries on, its subsidiary activities, demand unceasing and generous nourishment. You are really quite mistaken, Mrs. Ashton, in thinking that Saint Stephen's or any other church needs your help more than the church that you have always attended needs it.'

'It did seem to me that I could make my efforts and my help count for more at Saint Stephen's,' Isabel said. Although she felt it was base to resort again to the sentimental excuse that she had already put forward, Dr. Kendall's obstinately argumentative countenance drove her to take refuge in it. 'And the feeling that I should like to be of help to Mr. Hoyt, who had been the chaplain in my husband's regiment.'

'Well, now, Mrs. Ashton,' said Dr. Kendall, 'if you could

only be patient for a little while, I think you could be of help to Mr. Hoyt without ever leaving Saint Paul's.'

Isabel's face lighted. 'You mean you think he will be the next bishop?'

'Hardly that, hardly that.' Dr. Kendall laughed tolerantly, yet in a manner that ill-concealed the irritation provoked by the preposterous suggestion. 'No, that thought had not occurred to me. I'm unable to explain in detail, but I assure you it is altogether possible that you may be of help to Mr. Hoyt without severing your connection with Saint Paul's.'

'I'm sorry if my action is disappointing to you, Dr. Kendall,' Isabel spoke with increased firmness. 'But I've already taken it and I don't feel disposed to turn back now.'

'It seems to me a surprising action.' Dr. Kendall's heavy lips protruded sulkily. 'You gave me reason to believe not so long ago that you found great support and spiritual help in my sermons.'

'Yes, and I do wish you wouldn't think that this change is a slight to you personally. I can't bear to have you think that, Dr. Kendall.'

'It's difficult not to feel hurt when an old parishioner turns to another minister for guidance. If I had failed you in any way — but I don't understand that to be the case.'

'No, certainly not. You have always been kindness itself.'

'I admit, then, I am unable to understand why you should have taken this step without first giving me an opportunity to talk with you. And I am rather surprised, too, that Mr. Hoyt should have countenanced it.'

'He didn't inquire particularly into my affiliations. He was satisfied with the reasons that I gave him. And really, Dr. Kendall, I'm still satisfied with them myself, even though I can't prevail on you to see them.'

'I can't help feeling that you were hasty in making your decision. Since you have made it I no longer have any claim

on you; and I suppose that I must abandon hope of getting the help from you that I had come to ask for.'

'Have another cup of tea and show you're not cross with me. — No? — Then tell me in what way you thought I could be of help.'

'I can tell you in a few words, if you still care to hear. I believe that no parish has done its full duty by its church until it has made its church building and grounds as beautiful as possible. The builders of the old cathedrals had a sound idea — in making a place of worship beautiful, to the glory of God. Saint Paul's suffers from the lack of a handsome wall and gateway. It needs them in order to have a look of unity and completeness. During war time we weren't spending any money for such purposes. But it seems to me that the time has now come when we may appropriately proceed to complete and beautify our place of worship. Mr. Eberly at my request has drawn a sketch for a wall. I find that to build it will cost about fifteen thousand dollars. I propose to contribute one thousand, and I hope to secure contributions of like amount from fourteen other persons. It was with the expectation that you might be willing to contribute that I came to see you.'

Isabel looked a little puzzled. 'I had never thought of a wall as being needed,' she said. 'I rather like the openness of the grounds. Do you think it would look quite right — having the church walled off from the street?'

'I think I can settle your doubt on that point; I have here the sketch that Mr. Eberly has made — showing both the church and the wall.' He opened a leather case that he had deposited on the floor beside his chair and took out the drawing, which he spread before Isabel. 'You will see that the wall is not a high one — there is nothing forbidding or inhospitable about it. It sets the church off rather than shuts it off; it adds greatly to the dignity and charm of the building.'

'It's very difficult for me to judge, just from seeing a

sketch,' Isabel said. 'If it really would be a great improvement — but I'm not fully convinced. Of course I should like to respond, Dr. Kendall. The vestry have approved the plan, have they?'

'I haven't presented it to them yet,' he replied stiffly. 'I wanted to have the contributions all pledged so that I could come before them with what was virtually an accomplished fact. I haven't a doubt that they will approve it heartily.'

'In making gifts I'm not absolutely a free agent. My lawyer and man of business —' Isabel's eyes twinkled as she looked at the clergyman's glum face — 'expressed the hope that I wouldn't make any gifts of considerable sums without first consulting him. And I promised him that he should always be consulted. This question of a contribution is one that I think I must take up with him before I can give you a definite answer.'

'I trust that he is a person of some enlightenment and taste.'

'He ought to be. He's your son, Dr. Kendall.' She laughed. 'Didn't he ever happen to mention that he looks after my affairs for me?'

'Roger never talks to me about his business. He's always very close-mouthed about his clients' affairs. In fact, for all that he ever discloses, I should hardly suppose that he had any clients.'

'That's one reason why we all have such confidence in him. I will go to see him at once, and then you will hear from me.'

'I'm quite satisfied with that promise. And if there are any details of the plan about which your man of business wishes to be informed, Mrs. Ashton, please refer him to me.'

Dr. Kendall took his departure, slightly mollified at the prospect of obtaining the contribution that he had come to solicit, but still irritated. If he had not felt that his own tenure at Saint Paul's was now for a period of but a few weeks at most, he would not have relinquished so easily this opulent

member of the flock. As it was, although Mrs. Ashton's conduct was flighty in the extreme and showed her, despite her protestations, to be singularly unappreciative of her pastor, it was of little moment to him. He had never realized before how limited was her intelligence; the betrayal of her absurd notion that Hoyt might be the next bishop had been startling. That speech of hers rankled in Dr. Kendall's mind quite as much as her announcement that she had chosen to ally herself with another church.

Several days passed, and he did not hear from her. Meanwhile, his progress with the project of the wall was not encouraging. He had approached Isabel first of all his prospective contributors, for he had thought that she would be most readily amenable to his persuasion. Of the others, only his sister Harriet had given an unqualified promise; there seemed to be a disposition to question the desirability of the proposed gift. It appeared as if, in order to raise the necessary funds, he would have to appeal to the whole parish.

Roger came into his study one evening after dinner and said, 'Did you know, Father, that you've been warming a viper in your bosom?'

Dr. Kendall looked up with his light blue eyes round and protruding, denoting a readiness to take instant vengeance.

'A viper? Who?'

'Me,' said Roger. 'May I have one of your excellent cigars while I tell you about it?' Comfortably established, with his cigar lighted, he proceeded. 'I understand from a client of mine that you want her to give a thousand dollars toward a wall for the church.'

'Mrs. Ashton. Yes.'

'From what she said, I gathered that although she couldn't see any real necessity for the wall, she was ready to make the contribution just because you wanted it so much. I asked her to let me take the subject up with you. I feel quite strongly, Father, that you shouldn't urge her to contribute. She's no

longer a member of Saint Paul's; she would be actuated in making the gift not by any conviction that it was for an especially desirable purpose — only by a wish to be kind to the solicitor. You don't want a contribution in such circumstances.'

'I'm interested only in raising the money and getting the result,' said Dr. Kendall stubbornly. 'Why should you take it on yourself to interfere with her giving?'

'Because I'm looking after her property for her. And I think really it's not fair to put her under this kind of pressure. I wish you'd authorize me to tell her that on thinking the matter over you feel just that way about it.'

'It strikes me, Roger, that you're showing mighty little loyalty to me.'

'You haven't asked me for a contribution, Father. What I was going to propose is that if you will let me take the message I suggest to Mrs. Ashton, I will contribute one thousand dollars to your cause.'

'Eh!' Dr. Kendall fingered his moustache and looked at Roger unbelievingly. 'You mean it? You think you can afford it?'

'I'm quite prosperous,' Roger said. 'I shouldn't be making the offer if I couldn't afford it.'

'Then I'll accept it, and thank you very much, Roger, my boy,' said his father heartily, rising and coming over to grasp Roger's hand. 'All right; tell Mrs. Ashton she's excused.'

'Fine. How do you stand now on this wall matter, anyway?'

'It's purely a family affair, so far. It will cost fifteen thousand dollars, and I've raised three thousand — yourself, your Aunt Harriet, and myself, a thousand apiece.'

'If it's really a good thing we'll be proud to have done so much toward it. Why don't you announce that a fifth of the necessary amount has been given anonymously and call on the parish to raise the rest? They'll do it easily enough. Turn

the whole thing over to the vestry; let them do the collecting.'

'An excellent idea.'

Dr. Kendall warmed to it the more, as he reflected that anonymity need not be too carefully preserved.

XXIII

In making the preliminary arrangements for putting his candidacy before the members of the diocese, Dr. Kendall encountered some unfortunate delays. He had waited, hoping that several of the more influential clergymen would voluntarily come to him or write to him, to assure him that he was their choice for the nomination and to seek the privilege of organizing the forces that would bring about his election. From two rather obscure parsons he received letters, expressing admiration for his conduct of the funeral service and intimating their hope that at the convention they might have an opportunity to vote for him; but there was no immediate demonstration such as he had anticipated. After a few days had passed he decided that it would be unwise to remain inactive any longer; and he suggested to Robert Markham that he approach Dr. Dunn, the rector of the Church of the Ascension and a close friend of Dr. Kendall's, and ask him to undertake the work of promoting and organizing favorable sentiment throughout the diocese. This somewhat delicate task Markham agreed to assume, but he was unable to discharge it at once, owing to the fact that Dr. Dunn was at the time confined to his house by illness. The interview when it finally took place was satisfactory enough; Dr. Dunn heartily concurred with Markham in the opinion that Damon Kendall as bishop would be an ornament to the diocese, and he agreed to engage energetically in the work of lining up the delegates. Markham suggested to him that in making his plans he consult with Dr. Kendall, who was likely to have some useful ideas on methods of organization. On adopting the suggestion, Dr. Dunn found his friend benevolently willing to cooperate. Out of his own pocket Dr. Kendall paid for the services of a secretary whom Dr. Dunn found it necessary

to hire; he assisted in drawing up a modest biographical sketch of himself, copies of which Dr. Dunn thought it would be desirable to circulate among the clergy and the more influential laymen of the diocese, together with a personal letter in which he was to urge the qualifications of Dr. Kendall for the office and bespeak their support.

Yet before these documents were ready to be sent out, Dr. Dunn became possessed of disquieting information, which caused him at once to seek a conference with the candidate. He arrived at Dr. Kendall's office, a stout, round-faced little man of sixty, warm-hearted, impatient, irascible, energetic, undiplomatic. Dr. Kendall greeted him with the air of urbane detachment that he had assumed from the first in their intercourse concerning the election. 'How are you, Dunn? What can I do for you to-day?'

'It appears that there's another Richmond in the field,' said Dr. Dunn abruptly. He drew from his pocket a letter and laid it on Dr. Kendall's desk. 'You might read that and tell me what you think of it.' He sat down, crossed his legs, and fixed his eyes on his friend's face.

Dr. Kendall's lip curled as he read. 'George Crane, rector of Saint Mark's Church, Edgemere — I don't remember him,' he commented. 'So he wants to run our friend Hoyt as a candidate, does he? I shouldn't suppose he'd get very much of a following in that effort.' He folded up the letter and handed it rather disdainfully to Dr. Dunn.

'I don't know; after getting that letter this morning I telephoned to Stanton at the Epiphany and Hutchins at Christ Church and asked them if they had received a similar communication. They said they had, and what disturbed me — before I could make any comment they each volunteered the remark that they were quite favorably impressed by the suggestion.'

'I'm surprised.' Dr. Kendall pouted his lower lip and frowned. 'Stanton's erratic, of course, and between you and

me he's of a jealous disposition; that might account for his taking such a turn. But Hutchins — there's a mystery.'

'It's to be remembered that your name hasn't yet been presented to either of them.'

'No, and yet it's hardly conceivable that they shouldn't have heard it mentioned in this connection — or thought of it themselves.'

'Yes, quite true. And I didn't like the manner in which they each seemed to want to forestall any comment of mine by at once expressing their approval.'

'It's a singular movement, to have originated in Edgemere, with this man Crane. Do you think Hoyt himself is at the bottom of it?'

'It seems to me unlikely. He doesn't impress me as a schemer. In fact, I should say that he isn't at all ambitious and won't care for this activity in his behalf.'

'That is my feeling about him too. Perhaps the best course would be to suggest to him that he discourage these efforts of his well-meaning friends.'

'I hardly know how to go about doing that. It's a rather delicate matter — if he isn't himself disposed to put a stop to the propaganda.'

'It may be that he knows nothing about it.'

'In that case it won't be long before some friend enlightens him.'

'Yes, unquestionably. And Hoyt's a modest and sensible fellow; when he finds out what is going on he will no doubt let his friends know he isn't a candidate. The best way, I think, of checking this curious outburst is to put ourselves definitely in the field. As soon as we have done that we may expect to see sentiment crystallize rapidly.'

'I hope so. You didn't yourself get one of these letters from Crane?'

'No.'

'If he's written to all the other clergymen in the city, as he

has apparently done, and has omitted you, it's of course because he knows you're a candidate. It looks to me as if this drive were aimed at you.'

'I suppose it was too much to expect that there wouldn't be some opposition. But we can trust both to Hoyt's good sense and to that of our people in general. As soon as we get our letters out and start our campaign you will find that this movement will quietly fade away.'

Dr. Kendall's serenity had a reassuring and tranquilizing influence on his lieutenant, who departed thinking that he had perhaps allowed himself to become needlessly agitated. Any one remaining in the office, however, might have supposed that the quality of serene confidence had passed directly out of Dr. Kendall and into Dr. Dunn, for left alone and unobserved the candidate for bishop paced up and down the room, frowning gloomily, his lips pouted sullenly, his hands clasped behind his back and his eyes bent on the floor. If there were to be a contest, he had no dread of the outcome, but his indignation was aroused by the unfair attempt to capture delegates before he had announced his candidacy. All the clergymen in the diocese knew, of course, that he would be a candidate, that he was Bishop Addison's own candidate; it was contemptible tactics for a small element in opposition to try to steal a march on him and round up votes before he or his spokesmen had declared his intentions. Crane, Stanton, and Hutchins — there were three men to remember. Crane especially; if ever as bishop he should have an opportunity to administer discipline!

Meanwhile, Dr. Kendall's son was undergoing an experience no less disturbing to his peace of mind. Roger had been agreeably thrilled when Miss Colver came to him and said that Mrs. Ashton was in the office and would like to talk with him. He did not keep her waiting.

Isabel's face was so eager and animated, flashed so radiant a greeting, that Roger had one moment of wild delight,

imagining the sight of him had brought that look into her eyes. His disillusionment was, however, immediate and left him scornful of himself for having been so overwhelmed by a sudden wave of juvenile vanity.

'I have a cause, a real cause, that I'm working for,' she began, 'and I felt that I must try to enlist you in it too — for I know you could be tremendously helpful. — Can you let me have just a few minutes to tell you about it?'

'As much time as you want,' he assured her.

While she talked she unconsciously kept smoothing out her gloves on her lap, and Roger watched her hands, firm, graceful, capable even in this futile exercise. But soon the substance of her speech withdrew him from the contemplation of those fascinating objects, and he raised his eyes to her face in puzzled scrutiny.

'One evening recently the senior warden of Saint Stephen's called on me and told me of a movement that had just been started to have Mr. Hoyt elected bishop at the next diocesan convention. Of course, I was enthusiastically for it and promised to help in every way I could. Now they've put me on a committee of organization; we've had a meeting, and I made what the others were pleased to think was quite a good suggestion. And as usual the one who made the suggestion was the one delegated to carry it out. You can be the greatest help to me if you only will — and I feel quite confident you will, as you're such a friend and admirer of Mr. Hoyt.' She paused a moment and gave him another radiant and appealing glance, but something in his expression struck the warmth from her eyes. 'Aren't you interested?' she asked reproachfully.

'Yes, yes, very much so,' he hastened to reply. 'Please go on.'

'My idea was just this: that in every parish in the diocese we try to organize all the members who saw service in the war into a unit, as nearly as possible, for Mr. Hoyt. Then he

would go before the convention as the service men's candidate, and that in itself, I thought, might be almost enough to elect him. And I wondered if you wouldn't undertake the task of organizing the service men of Saint Paul's into such a unit. You're the ranking officer of them all, and being the rector's son besides — '

'I'm afraid there's just the difficulty, Mrs. Ashton. You see, my father is a candidate himself.' He spoke lightly and smiled at her, but in spite of his effort to reassure her a look of consternation settled and seemed to freeze on her face.

'Oh, how perfectly dreadful!' she exclaimed. 'Not his being a candidate, of course — but that I didn't know! You will try to forgive me, won't you?'

'Forgive you! Why, I'd really like to join you and work for Hoyt, of course — in any other circumstances. He'd make a fine bishop.'

'That's all I thought of, from the moment it was suggested to me. I never even thought of anybody else. And it's just happened, I suppose, that no one mentioned to me that your father is a candidate.'

'It's a mighty good idea you've presented,' said Roger. 'You're a formidable person to be in opposition. I won't betray you or your plan to Father; you needn't feel alarmed about that.'

Her stroking of her gloves became more rapid and agitated than before. 'I wonder if I ought to give up working for Mr. Hoyt — having so recently been a parishioner of your father's. — No, I can't do that. I engaged to work for him in good faith, because he seemed to me exactly the right man. — But among my friends who are members of Saint Paul's — I've invited some of them to meet him at dinner at my house tomorrow night, and in the invitation I mentioned that he was my candidate for bishop and that I hoped after meeting him they would share my feeling! I suppose I ought not to continue to canvass for Mr. Hoyt in your father's parish. — What

do you think I ought to do — or ought not to do, in the circumstances, Mr. Kendall?'

'I can't undertake to advise you,' Roger answered. 'This is a question in which I'm an interested party. If you want advice on it, you'll have to go to some one else.'

'Isn't it embarrassing! I had no idea what I was getting into. I think, of course, your father would make a very good bishop, but I suppose I thought of him as about ready to retire. And it does seem to me it would be well to have a younger man at the head of the diocese — and one who has had the sort of experience that Mr. Hoyt has been through — dealing with all sorts of men.'

'I can quite understand your feeling,' said Roger. 'And if only my father weren't a candidate, you'd have my heartiest coöperation. You know that, I'm sure.'

'Yes. I'm quite upset. Your father will probably never forgive me — but at least tell him that from the moment I learned he was in the field I refrained from trying to capture any of his parishioners. I think, though, I shall have to go ahead with my dinner party.'

'There's no reason why you shouldn't. You made all your arrangements without knowing of Father's intention.'

'It's so disheartening to find, when you've thought you were simply helping a person that you like and respect, that you've also been injuring another person that you like and respect. It's almost enough to make one forswear all good works forever.'

'Now that you ladies are getting into politics it won't do for you to be thin-skinned about such matters.'

'No, I suppose not. And I shall keep right on trying to get my candidate elected. But you've managed to take a good deal of the zest out of it for me.'

The evening that Isabel was giving her dinner for her candidate, Roger dined at home with his father and mother. Laura had gone out to a dinner at the Warders'; she had dis-

played herself to the family before departing, and Roger had asked her whence had come the bouquet of violets for her corsage. 'Oh, my young man sent me those,' said Laura, smiling and turning her pretty dark head to view herself in the mirror over the mantelpiece. 'Since the dinner's at his house he has probably sent a similar bouquet to each of his lady guests.'

'How extremely probable!' said Roger. 'Let us know about that when you come home.'

She laughed, threw her cloak trimmed with swansdown over her bare shoulders, caught up her yellow satin skirt, kissed each member of the family, and departed. The three who remained resumed their interrupted meal.

'I guess it won't be long before this will be the normal family party — just the three of us,' observed Roger.

'And how long then can we count on there being three of us?' asked his mother.

'Not a great while, I suspect,' said Dr. Kendall. 'What begins as a duet should end as one, eh, Mary? That's both art and nature.'

'Nobody seems likely to take me off your hands,' said Roger.

'I suspect you're playing some sort of a deep game,' replied Dr. Kendall.

He was in a genial mood; the fact that Dr. Dunn's letters had at last gone out and had already brought in some favorable responses had restored his confidence. He was glad that he had not told any of his family about the opposition that he had encountered; no need to disturb them unnecessarily. Now they might not learn of it at all until it was virtually a thing of the past.

After dinner while they were sitting in the library the telephone bell rang; Roger answered it. He recognized his Aunt Harriet's voice.

'Is your father in this evening, Roger?'

'Yes, Aunt Harriet.'

'Then I'm coming right over to see him. Your Uncle Robert is out at a meeting this evening, and I've just heard something very important and unpleasant. I feel I must let your father know about it right away. Perhaps you'd better tell him that it's very important and unpleasant — just to prepare him a little.'

After she had rung off, Roger turned to his mother and father. 'Aunt Harriet's on her way over,' he announced. 'She has something very important and unpleasant to tell us. She wants us to prepare ourselves.'

'How in the world are we going to do it?' asked his mother. 'Did she say who it is that is especially affected by this unpleasant thing?'

'No; she just seemed very much excited — more excited, I should say, than depressed. So it's probably this household and not her own that is the one to suffer.'

'Your Aunt Harriet is the kindest person alive,' remarked Dr. Kendall, 'but if there is ever any bad news to be announced anywhere she always volunteers to carry it. I can't imagine what she may have got hold of now. — Unless,' he added in a tone not entirely devoid of satisfaction, 'it is that Francis has lost or is going to lose his job.'

Mrs. Kendall said without looking up from the baby blanket that she was knitting, 'Anything of that sort we should have heard from Adelaide herself, I think. She wouldn't have entrusted it to roundabout delivery.'

'Nevertheless, I have no doubt that is what Harriet has to tell us,' insisted Dr. Kendall. 'Robert has always had rather a weakness for Francis, and it's quite likely that when the blow fell Francis went to him at once; he undoubtedly felt it would be easier to face him than me.'

'That is quite likely,' said Mrs. Kendall dryly. 'If he has been forced out of his position he will probably soon find something better.'

'I don't know why that is to be expected. — I'm sorry

to disappoint Harriet, but her news won't be much of a shock to me.' Dr. Kendall opened his newspaper with a definiteness that indicated that so far as he was concerned the work of preparation was complete.

A few minutes later Mrs. Markham's voice was heard as without ceremony she entered the house. 'On second thought, Peasley, you needn't wait. Call for me in an hour.' She had laid aside her wrap by the time that Roger came to welcome her and was patting and arranging her hair. 'I hope I haven't frightened you, Roger,' she said, kissing him. 'It's nothing to be frightened about, but I do think it's serious enough — yes, serious enough,' she added for the benefit of her brother and his wife, who now appeared before her.

'Whatever it is, Harriet, Damon at least is fully prepared for it,' said Mrs. Kendall.

'I certainly am glad of that.' Mrs. Markham eased her stout bulk carefully into a deep chair and leaned back with a sigh. 'For it was you, Damon, I was thinking of most when I told Roger I hoped you would prepare yourselves. I just learned late this afternoon from Mrs. Sheldon that right here in your own parish, Damon, there's an active propaganda going on to make Mr. Hoyt bishop.'

'Eh!' exclaimed Dr. Kendall, obviously startled. 'Right in my own parish! That's impossible!'

'Shouldn't you think so! But Mrs. Sheldon has gone to a dinner that Isabel Ashton is giving for Mr. Hoyt. And she said that in the note of invitation Isabel expressed the hope that all the guests would want to urge Mr. Hoyt's election.'

'Upon my soul!' exclaimed Dr. Kendall. 'It's the most egregious impudence I ever heard of — to say nothing of the treachery of it!'

'I know something about this,' interposed Roger. 'You mustn't do Mrs. Ashton an injustice. I can explain just how it happened.'

'Yes, that's true, you're her business adviser,' said his father sarcastically. 'You don't mean to tell me she came to you for advice on this matter!'

'She was so absolutely unaware of your wish to be a candidate, Father, that she came to me to seek my support for Mr. Hoyt. She was quite overwhelmed when I told her that you were a candidate. She said that of course she would abandon all electioneering efforts in the parish at once — though she felt she would have to go ahead with this dinner that she had arranged.'

'And why, I should like to know, did she find my candidacy unthinkable?' inquired Dr. Kendall.

'She apparently had received some impression somehow that you contemplated retiring from active work.'

'There was no occasion for her ever to receive any such impression. I still say her action was egregious — egregious, meddlesome, and ludicrous. When she chose to withdraw from Saint Paul's she should have realized that it was no longer fitting for her to solicit the interest of members of that parish in any candidate of hers. But really the episode is too paltry to discuss. Isabel Ashton's influence in a question that affects the entire diocese is negligible. Mr. Hoyt will gain nothing from having such a champion.'

'I'm relieved to have you talk in that way,' said Mrs. Markham. 'I couldn't help being worried, for I've heard from one or two sources that Mr. Hoyt is mentioned as a candidate, and I was afraid that Isabel Ashton, with her social position and wealth —'

'My dear Harriet, do you think we're living in the Middle Ages? It is hundreds of years since the custom of buying bishoprics fell into disrepute.'

'Of course I didn't mean anything like that, Damon. But when an attractive young woman with a great deal of money sets out to accomplish a purpose, she's sure to be much more effective than she would be if she were merely an attractive young woman.'

'It passes my comprehension why she should be trying to interject herself into this affair.'

'It doesn't pass mine,' retorted his sister. 'Nothing could be more obvious. She's in love with the man, of course.'

The assertion gave Roger something of an electric shock.

'Hm!' said Dr. Kendall. 'That may account for it. When she undertook to explain to me why she had gone over to Saint Stephen's, she laid a good deal of stress on what a poor parish it was and how useful she thought she could be in it. Of course there are any number of poor parishes that she might have chosen to work for.'

'When a young woman finds that a cause is calling her very urgently, you may be sure that a man is the cause,' observed Mrs. Markham.

'Yes,' agreed Mrs. Kendall. 'I have no doubt that Harriet has hit upon the true explanation. And so I think you can afford to look leniently on Isabel's backsliding, Damon.'

'She wouldn't have come out of mourning so soon if she hadn't discovered the attraction of another man,' continued Mrs. Markham. 'It's hardly a year now, is it, since her husband was killed?'

'About a year,' said Roger.

'She's been wearing colors for a month at least. And we all remember how crushed she was by the news of his death. In fact, no longer than last spring she was simply a monument of grief. Interest in another man is the only thing that could effect such a change in so short a time.'

'I have no objection to the marriage of widows and widowers,' said Dr. Kendall. 'I think it's usually a very sane and proper proceeding. But it is quite inappropriate that a romance of that sort should be involved in a diocesan election.'

'If it isn't going to affect the result, Damon,' said Mrs. Kendall, mildly, 'you mustn't begrudge them an opportunity that brings them together.'

'I suppose not.' He had resumed his usual complaisance of tone and manner. 'I'm glad you've told me this, Harriet. I will admit I was feeling somewhat aggrieved over Isabel Ashton's conduct; now I can in a measure sympathize with it. When it comes to the election, I'll venture to predict that Hoyt won't be taken seriously as a candidate by any one.'

'I'm greatly relieved that you feel so confident, Damon.'

'If I weren't, I mightn't find it so easy to adopt a forgiving attitude. — Roger, if your client approaches you again for advice on the subject, suggest to her that it's a mistake always to try to push anybody ahead at a more than normal rate of speed.'

Roger smiled, though it was hard for him to be responsive to his father's cheerfulness. His own hopes were in eclipse.

XXIV

When Laura, returning from the Warders' dinner, entered the house late in the evening, her father came out of his study to greet her.

'Father dear!' she exclaimed. 'You ought to be in bed!'

'It ill becomes you to say that,' he responded cheerfully. 'Though you look as if late hours agreed with you. I think you must have had a good time.'

'Yes, I did,' she answered; the kiss she bestowed on him was an unusually happy sort of kiss. 'It was a very nice party.'

'Come in and get warm in front of the fire before you go upstairs,' he suggested.

As she stood holding out her pretty arms toward the blaze, with the light from it flickering over her face and glancing from the sheen of her satin dress, he looked at her with affectionate pride. 'Tell me about the dinner. Whom did you sit next to?'

'Tom Langdon on one side, and Fred Fisher on the other. They're both of them quite amusing. And it was *the* most delicious dinner!'

'How many guests were there?'

'Eighteen or twenty, I think. It was quite large. Lovely orchids for every one — see how nicely mine goes with my violets?'

'All the other girls were wearing violets just like yours, as you expected?' He glanced at her from his inspection of the orchid, with a twinkle in his eyes.

'Father dear, you're getting to be quite a tease, aren't you? No, I seemed to be the only one who was so favored.'

'Astonishing! Well!' He waited for a few minutes, and

then as she volunteered nothing further he said, 'You didn't have any talk with Leonard, I suppose?'

'Oh, yes, I did.' She put a satin-shod foot up on the brass fender. 'He drifted over to me after the men came in from smoking. And then, although there seemed to be chairs enough in the room where we were, at his suggestion we went into the billiard-room — where no one was. He said he never could talk in a room with a lot of other people chattering all round him. I asked him how he managed at dinner, and he said that he never talked there, but just ate and drank.'

'Then you were fortunate, weren't you, in not having him for your table companion?'

'I told him so, and succeeded in getting a very silly reply. — But Father —' she turned toward him with a certain anxiety — 'there was one thing he said that will interest you.'

'What was it?'

'He asked me what he should do about a request that he had received this afternoon. He admitted that it was rather absurd — picking on him as if he were a really active member of the church when, as you know, he hardly ever goes inside the doors. But some man who was a sergeant in his regiment and who goes to Saint Stephen's telephoned to Leonard this afternoon and told him that there was a World War veterans' unit being organized in every parish in the diocese to work for the election of Mr. Hoyt as bishop, and that they wanted him to organize the service men in Saint Paul's.'

Dr. Kendall grunted. 'The effrontery of that proceeding doesn't surprise me as much as it might. I've had other evidence of a scheme of some of the Saint Stephen's people to run Hoyt as their candidate. This idea of executing a raid on my parish — the sergeant hopes apparently to introduce a little military strategy into the campaign. I hardly think there will be much response from our young men. What reply did Leonard make?'

'Leonard, of course, knows nothing about what is going on in the community outside of finance and sport. He told the sergeant he thought it was a fine idea, but that he wasn't the man to do the organizing. He suggested Roger, but the sergeant said that Roger had been approached and wasn't able to help.'

'This is very interesting! Why shouldn't Roger have told me of it?'

'He probably thought it was unimportant, or else he didn't want to tell you something that would just be disturbing. Anyway, Leonard told the sergeant that he expected to see some one this evening who could advise him. So innocently enough he asked me who would be the best person to organize our service men. I said I really didn't know, and that as you were a candidate I hoped any organization of the sort would be in your interest and not in that of anybody else.'

'What did Leonard say to that?'

'He decided right off that since that was the case he couldn't do anything for Mr. Hoyt, much as he admires him.'

'A very proper reply. And I have no doubt it is one that will be echoed by every young man in the parish who is approached.'

'I'm sure it will be. You don't feel at all anxious about the outcome, do you, Father?'

'Not in the least. My belief is that Mr. Hoyt is quite ignorant of these activities in his behalf, and that when he finds he is being pushed forward he will withdraw his name rather than seek a contest. He would certainly not countenance such an invasion of my parish as his friends are attempting.'

'No, of course not. Good-night, Father dear.'

'Good-night, Laura.' He kissed her affectionately and stood for a moment holding her hand. 'Leonard's a pretty good fellow, isn't he?'

'Why do you ask me that?' she answered, laughing; she gave him another quick kiss and ran out of the room and up the stairs.

He moved methodically about, trying window fastenings, before putting out the lights. His mind was tranquil, in spite of the annoyances to which it had been subjected in the course of the evening. Laura's happiness, even though she was not yet ready to make a full confession of it, was unmistakable; it communicated happiness to him. The marriage of that dear girl to Leonard Warder, at which he would officiate as bishop, would be a delightful event; his imagination dwelt upon it fondly.

During the next three days there was no untoward occurrence to mar his quiet contentment. The responses to the letters in which Dr. Dunn had informally presented Dr. Kendall's qualifications for bishop continued to be gratifying. Many of Dr. Kendall's parishioners wrote to him volunteering their support, many of them called on him in person to assure him of it.

It was the casual remark of one of these well-wishers whom he had met on the street that awakened in him a sense of uneasiness.

'I had hoped,' said this friend, 'that the delegation that Saint Paul's will send to the convention would be unanimous for you, Dr. Kendall. I guess it will be pretty nearly that. But I understand the Hoyt supporters are working hard to capture one of our deputies.'

'I've had something of the sort intimated to me,' Dr. Kendall rejoined. 'Who is it that is being especially active in Mr. Hoyt's behalf?'

'Tom Knowles expects to be chosen a deputy by the military vote — so my son tells me. He's organizing the service men for that purpose; I have to admit my son, in his loyalty to his regiment, seems likely to fall into line. He tells me that throughout the parish this organization is

making headway. Probably you know all about it, Dr. Kendall, but I thought it might be as well to suggest to you that there may be a real danger.'

'Thank you for your interest,' said Dr. Kendall. 'I don't choose, though, to do any electioneering; I leave that to whatever other candidates there may be. It seems a trifle ungrateful and ungracious, I must say, that any one of my parishioners should deliberately be working against me, but of course I shall bear no resentment; some things must be forgiven to the enthusiasm of youth.'

He proceeded directly to Dr. Dunn's office in the Church of the Ascension and found the clergyman at his desk. He reported to him the information that he had just received from his parishioner.

'Yes,' said Dr. Dunn, and there was a slight note of irritation in his voice; the task of serving as Dr. Kendall's campaign manager was beginning to be irksome. 'The soldier vote is being lined up against you; there's no doubt of it. And the curious fact is, as I've learned only to-day, the originator of that whole scheme, which is the most serious menace to your chances that has yet appeared, is a former parishioner of yours — not a World War veteran at all, but a young woman.'

'Not Mrs. Ashton!'

'Yes; I have a friend at Saint Stephen's who told me that she suggested that idea. She declined, however, to do any work in organizing the unit in your parish; this young man Knowles that you speak of was inspired to take on the work by one of Hoyt's other followers.'

'It would hardly be dignified for me, in the circumstances, to say anything to Knowles,' observed Dr. Kendall. 'But it's occurred to me that it might perhaps have a good effect if you were to point out to him the impropriety of his action.'

'I hardly think I care to undertake that task, Dr. Kendall,'

replied Dr. Dunn firmly. 'And I doubt if such interference on my part would be at all effective.'

'You may be right,' Dr. Kendall said quickly. He pursed his lips and frowned while he thought of all the mischievous activity that had resulted from Isabel Ashton's sudden infatuation for Hoyt. In justice to himself, in order that it might be seen that through no dissatisfaction with his preaching or his ministry had this rich and altogether desirable parishioner deserted his church, he mentioned to Dr. Dunn the true reason for her new affiliation. 'At least so I am informed,' he qualified the statement.

'Ah, yes; interesting,' commented Dr. Dunn. But a certain distaste for the enlightenment that he had received showed in his surprised glance at his brother clergyman.

Dr. Kendall, brooding over his problem, was unaware of having produced any unfavorable impression.

'It seems incredible,' he said at last, 'that Hoyt should still be in ignorance of all the electioneering that is going on in his behalf.'

'Yes. There can't be any question, I think, that he knows, and that he's willing to have his name presented to the convention.'

'I think we had rather assumed that he would withdraw as soon as he learned of his friends' activities.'

'I'm afraid we shall have to abandon that assumption. It was based, of course, on our expectation that his campaign wouldn't have any strength. Now that it is showing strength, it's natural that he should yield to his friends' persuasion.'

'Yes, natural enough,' Dr. Kendall agreed. 'But, Dunn, don't let yourself be misled as he probably has been into thinking that he can be elected.' He leaned forward in his chair and spoke earnestly, emphasizing his remarks with lifted forefinger. 'The time hasn't come, and I think it will never come, when a military junta is able to control a diocesan election. And you know, Dunn, that though I say this,

I have nothing but respect and admiration for the American Legion.'

'I doubt if they would recognize themselves under the appellation of a military junta,' commented Dr. Dunn. 'You won't win votes by applying that term to them, I'm very sure.'

'It is, of course, just between ourselves; I would do nothing so indiscreet. I think, though, it would be most unfortunate if there were to be any cleavage between the older, more conservative members of the church and the younger generation. Any contest that would tend to divide the church on those lines would be harmful. I believe that the exercise of a little diplomacy can avert the danger. Hoyt hasn't withdrawn, as we expected him to do; now it may be possible to present some considerations to him that will show him how unwise it would be for him to continue as a candidate.'

'There again I haven't the temerity.' Dr. Dunn spoke with decision. 'And I hardly know what the considerations are that could be presented.'

'He's a comparatively young man still; I can conceive of considerations.' Dr. Kendall spoke in his customary weighty judicial tone. 'I believe that I could present them to him in a way that he would not take amiss — in a way that would leave him, in fact, with a desire to coöperate rather than obstruct.'

'It's your risk, if you wish to try it. I don't know that even if you failed any harm would result from the attempt.'

'You may be sure that no harm will result. And I hardly think I shall fail.' Dr. Kendall rose. 'Keep your courage up, Dunn. I'll let you know the outcome of my effort.'

Meditating on the situation during the drive back to his office, Dr. Kendall perceived the importance of proceeding diplomatically with every step. Thus, it would be impolitic, as well as undignified, for him to seek an interview with Hoyt; there must be no ground for the suspicion that he was in the slightest degree a suppliant. Besides, the mere fact

of his seniority would forbid his going to Hoyt with a request. On the other hand, he could hardly summon Hoyt — who, in such an event, would no doubt feel that if Dr. Kendall had anything to say to him he should come to him and say it. A cordial display of hospitality must be the lure. Dr. Kendall reflected that his house would be a more advantageous meeting place than his club; a hospitality in which his family shared would be more friendly and personal, and more effective in creating in the guest an amenable frame of mind than that which the club restaurant and lounging-room could offer. And as it was important to act with as little delay as possible, Dr. Kendall decided to telephone his invitation.

His secretary, Miss Wilcox, notified him that she had made the connection.

'Is this Mr. Hoyt? Dr. Kendall of Saint Paul's is speaking. — Good-morning. Can I persuade you to come and take luncheon with me at my house to-morrow or next day? There are some things I should like to talk over with you, but it's hard for me to get away from my office either in the morning or the afternoon, and I know that you must be equally occupied. — You can come to-morrow? Good. At one o'clock. It will be a great pleasure to us all to see you. Good-bye.'

Dr. Kendall hung up the receiver with a bland feeling that the first of his diplomatic maneuvers had been successful.

In the second his wife and daughter gave him their most loyal support. They welcomed the rival candidate with a cordiality and graciousness to which he responded immediately; had they conceived of him as a gloomy and ascetic parson, the conception vanished before his lively talk. He had arrived in his new Ford runabout, a present to him from his parishioners; he had but recently obtained his driver's license; it was still an exciting adventure for him to drive through the city streets.

'I find that I blow my horn more frequently than most drivers,' he said at luncheon, discoursing on his new acquisition. 'In fact, on my way up here, at a cross-street where I'd been obliged to come to a full stop, I found myself blowing my horn as a signal that I was about to start. I noticed that people seemed amused. You're no doubt a practiced driver of motor cars, Miss Kendall. How long must I go on betraying my inexperience?'

'If you're anything like me, just as long as you are inexperienced,' replied Laura. 'I think one has to drive a couple of thousand miles before one feels perfectly at home with a car.'

'It sounds like a matter of months! Especially as my parish isn't large in area and I'm not required to cover much ground in making my visits.'

Dr. Kendall laughed genially. 'Your parishioners were looking ahead, perhaps, Mr. Hoyt, to the time when your work will cover a larger area.'

'No,' Hoyt replied. 'I think when they gave me the car they were anticipating as little as I the possibility of any change in my activities.'

Dr. Kendall looked at him sharply. The bantering allusion had drawn a different kind of answer from what might have been expected — one that showed no disposition on Hoyt's part to be deprecating or to pretend lack of comprehension. Mrs. Kendall and Laura, to whom Dr. Kendall had accounted for inviting the guest only by saying that since he and Hoyt were both candidates it was desirable for them to come together for a frank and friendly talk at the outset of the campaign in order that there should be no ill-feeling, felt less surprised at the character of the reply than at the suggestion that had evoked it.

'I hope,' said Mrs. Kendall, 'that you won't use your car merely as a vehicle of duty, Mr. Hoyt, whatever is to be the sphere of your activities. I feel sure that your parishioners wanted you to have many pleasure trips.'

'Yes,' said Laura. 'And of course there's no pleasure in driving about the city.'

'Oh, on the contrary, I quite enjoy the excitement — even though it's rather appalling.'

'I should think all you men who have come back from the other side would have had excitement enough,' said Dr. Kendall. 'A life of quiet and peace, without excitement or conflict of any sort — I supposed that would be your ideal. I have to admit it's mine. Speed and conflict — I abhor them both. Life might be so much more gracious than it is, if only we were all willing to go about the business of it in a more leisurely fashion and to resort to conciliation and compromise rather than contest.'

Hoyt concurred politely in that view and turned the conversation to Roger, whose companionship, he said, had been most congenial. The subject was one to which Mrs. Kendall and Laura seemed more responsive than Dr. Kendall; they questioned their guest eagerly in an effort to enlarge their stock of knowledge concerning Roger's military service. And then Laura somewhat diffidently asked Mr. Hoyt if Leonard Warder had not also shown himself a capable officer, and hadn't he been very popular with his men — to which inquiries Mr. Hoyt returned answers so satisfactory that Laura's eyes sparkled with even a livelier animation than when she had listened to the gratifying comment on her brother.

On rising from the luncheon table Dr. Kendall said, 'Now shall we go into my study for a few minutes, Hoyt? You smoke, I'm sure.'

'Only a pipe — if that's allowed.'

'By all means. You're sure I can't tempt you with a cigar?'

When the guest, with his pipe lighted, was established in a comfortable chair and opposite him Dr. Kendall, with his cigar lighted, was established in another comfortable chair,

the host, rubbing the palms of his hands together with a slow rotary motion, said,

'Hoyt, I understand that we're both of us candidates for bishop.'

'So it seems,' Hoyt answered.

Dr. Kendall felt that the self-possessed crispness of the reply boded ill for the success of his plan. He preserved, however, his urbanity of voice and manner as he said,

'I take it that your hat was in the ring, to adopt the phrase of the politicians, for some time before you were aware of it.'

'Yes. It was only three days ago that I learned of the intention of my friends to nominate me.'

'I dare say it wasn't a great surprise to you?'

'Oh, quite. The possibility hadn't entered my head.'

'It would hardly have occurred to me, either, to expect to be nominated, had not Bishop Addison several times in the last year expressed to me and to others who have reported the conversation to me the wish that when he retired I should be chosen to succeed him. That desire of his became, I think, pretty generally known throughout the diocese. Of course, as you were absent in France all last year you probably heard nothing of it.'

'No, I was rather out of touch with the affairs of the diocese.'

'Yes, naturally. The fact that Bishop Addison had a preference — had expressed to so many persons a definite hope — is likely, if I may rely on various indications that have come to me, to have a strong, perhaps a controlling influence on the election. I hope you will pardon me if I speak frankly what is in my mind, and that you will try to think me not quite so egotistical as I may sound.'

'Please feel free to speak with perfect frankness, Dr. Kendall. I think, don't you, that the man who is completely frank is seldom egotistical?'

'Ha, a very sound observation. Well, then, to be com-

pletely frank, if this election were likely to be decided on the basis of our comparative merits and deserts, Mr. Hoyt, I admit I should feel very far from confident. But whether we like it or not, we have to recognize the fact that in diocesan elections as in other elections, the respective merits of the candidates are not the only determining consideration. The evidence that reaches me tends to show that the sentiment in my favor created by Bishop Addison's frequently expressed wish has been strengthened by the fact that I have perhaps a wider personal acquaintance than any other clergyman in the diocese, am, therefore, in a sense the best known; and these advantages, taken together with what are, I venture to hope, reasonable qualifications of a spiritual and intellectual character, are sufficient, unless my sources of information are entirely untrustworthy, to make my election virtually certain. I admit always the possibility of error in any human calculations, but I'm trying to put the situation as it presents itself to me, and at the same time as impartially and impersonally as I can.'

'I appreciate that.' Hoyt smiled and waved his pipe reassuringly. 'Please go on — without any compunctions at all.'

'Now it has always seemed to me unfortunate whenever, in any matter affecting the Church, there is a contest. Even such a contest as this which is foreshadowed between you and me, where only the best of good feeling would prevail between us, would be pretty sure to provoke a show of partisanship and hostility among many of our adherents; I do think it's desirable to avoid, if we possibly can, creating a situation that might have unpleasant after-effects. If you will pardon a personal question, how old are you, Mr. Hoyt?'

'Forty-three.'

'That's rather young — at least from my point of view. I'm sixty-three. Twenty years is quite a difference, isn't it? After you came back from France last spring I resolved that

if Bishop Addison's wish ever should be fulfilled, I would exert my influence to have you chosen to succeed me as rector of Saint Paul's. And you know, the rector of Saint Paul's has always been — ah, rather close to the bishop.'

A faint flush colored Hoyt's pale face.

'I should rather not have you commit yourself, Dr. Kendall. And I am afraid that if your future support of me is conditional on my withdrawal as a candidate now — which is the only interpretation that I can put on your words — I shall have to forego it.'

Dr. Kendall frowned and was silent for a moment while he deposited the ash from his cigar with minute care in a small receptacle.

'I hope that you won't be hasty in making up your mind, Mr. Hoyt,' he said. 'I am trying to be disinterested in this matter. I am trying to work out a plan that will be best for the Church, and one that will be to your interest no less than to mine.'

'There is no reason that I can see why any election conducted in the prescribed manner should stir up trouble in the diocese,' said Hoyt. 'It is quite likely that all the advantages that you mention will determine the election in your favor. But inasmuch as there are apparently a certain number of people who wish to make me their candidate, I am willing that they should do so. I have already given that assurance to some of them, and I see no reason to retract it.'

'It is somewhat surprising to me that you should lend a receptive ear to such advisers,' said Dr. Kendall. 'It will be damaging to your prestige, Mr. Hoyt, if you undergo a smashing defeat.'

'I am not concerned about my prestige; I am not concerned with canvassing for votes. But any deputy to the convention who wishes to vote for me shall be free to do so. The fact that the service men in many of the parishes are organizing to support me is virtually a command to me, as I look at it,

to accept the nomination as their candidate. — I ought to say, in this connection, that only yesterday I learned that they had gone into your parish in my interests. I at once asked them to discontinue all their efforts there; that was a discourtesy for which I am very sorry.'

Dr. Kendall accepted the expression of regret with a wave of the hand, and said:

'Possibly you don't know that this organized movement of the service men to which you attach evidently some importance was conceived, not by a service man, but by a lady — by one who was until a very short time ago a parishioner of mine, but who for some whim that I don't profess to understand recently went over to Saint Stephen's. Are you aware that Mrs. Ashton is the person who concocted this electioneering scheme on which you are apparently relying for results?'

'No, I was not aware of it. But I can't see that the fact makes any difference.'

'Why, my dear sir,' exclaimed Dr. Kendall, losing patience, 'it's just the difference between a genuine, spontaneous movement and one worked up artificially by a young woman for purposes and interests of her own.'

'And those are?' said Hoyt, his eyes glittering angrily.

'Oh, as I said, I don't profess to know. But her eager activity is sufficient proof that they exist. Why, Isabel Ashton — I've known her since she was a child. She's always been a parishioner of mine. She was married in my church. Now suddenly she leaves the church where she has always worshiped — making no other excuse than that she wishes to attend your church because you were the chaplain of her husband's regiment. Not only goes over to your church for that reason, but sets to work instantly to have you made a bishop!' The ludicrousness of it, even in the recital, almost put Dr. Kendall into a good humor; he chuckled for a moment while he held his cigar between his broad white fingers.

Hoyt drew out his watch and looked at it.

'I am due back at my office,' he said abruptly, rising, 'I regret that I can't comply with your wishes.'

Dr. Kendall recognized the finality in his tone and manner, and rose at once. 'Very well. And I fear you will have reason to regret it.' The brusque utterance left him with his lower lip thrust forward sulkily; it retained that position and expression while he escorted his guest to the door. There was an awkward moment when Hoyt stepped into the drawing-room to bid Mrs. Kendall and her daughter good-bye. They each of them shook hands with him cordially, and expressed the hope that he would come often to meals: 'Just telephone,' said Mrs. Kendall. 'If we can't have you, we'll say so.'

'It will be good practice for you, running back and forth in the Ford,' said Laura. Dr. Kendall stood mute, with his hands clasped behind his back.

'Wasn't it a success after all, Damon?' asked Mrs. Kendall after the guest had departed.

'Not particularly; he wasn't very amenable to suggestions.'

'I liked him,' said Laura.

Dr. Kendall shrugged his shoulders; at that moment the raucous sound of a Ford horn gave notice that the guest was making his cautious exit through the gateway. To Dr. Kendall it seemed the ill-mannered parting fling of one in retreat — defiant, insolent, but abortive.

XXV

Following the hounds across the russet-colored fields, in company with other red-coated riders, and with a few ladies who for this occasion seemed to have appropriated the more quiet hues of men's clothing, Roger gave himself up to enjoyment of motion and sights and sounds. His horse, a young, eager, powerful animal, was having its first experience in competition; to the rider its wild excitement, its palpitant desire to lead the field, were amusing and exhilarating — none the less because he was exercising his skill to defeat the young horse's purpose. A warm south wind blew out of a sky innocent of cloud; apples shone red on orchard trees; in the fringe of forest past which the hunt took its course the maples and hickories were flaming, the birches glowed golden, the oaks stood sheathed in shining bronze.

To the right of him and a little in advance was Sally Winant; he watched her, admiring the way she sat her horse, the way she took the fences and walls. With the same assurance and courage, he knew, she would have put her horse at jumps doubly forbidding; no obstacles in the hunting field ever daunted her. This fearlessness of hers had been one of the qualities that years before had enchanted him. Now he was aware that the very demonstration of spirit and character that he had once found so intensely moving he looked upon with rather impersonal admiration. That perception registered itself on his consciousness while he rode; later, during the hunt breakfast at the club, he worked out the explanation of his mental defection from an ideal or a loyalty. A mere display of physical courage, especially in an affair for which one had been well schooled, had no longer the exaggerated significance for him that it had held before the war. Almost any one who was competent in a particular field of work would be

reasonably courageous in executing whatever duty was there presented to him. Courage was not the ultimate touchstone that he used to think it. No one of any character could be deficient in it; on the other hand, persons of very little character could be quite generously endowed with it. Courage was to be assumed of any woman who had charm and personality. It might not be courage that manifested itself in the hunting field; for exploits of that sort a woman otherwise courageous might have no heart. And on the other hand the courage that shone in the field might sometimes be of a different sort from that with which it was important to meet the more usual and abiding issues of life. Whenever he saw Sally, the vision of Isabel, a woman of a different type, arose in his mind and made him critical of the personality which he had once thought the most alluring in the world.

After luncheon, young Mrs. John Harrison came to Roger and said beguilingly, 'Sally and John and I are crazy to have a rubber of bridge before we start home. Won't you make a fourth, Mr. Kendall?'

He assented; a few minutes later he was seated at a table in the cardroom of the clubhouse with Sally as his partner. The cards ran against them from the beginning; Sally made matters worse by playing recklessly in adversity. When she announced that it was time to stop, she and Roger were heavy losers.

'Sorry, partner,' Sally said, rising from the table while Roger was making his settlement with John Harrison. 'I played like a wild woman; I dragged you down. — I'll send you a check, Fanny, when I get home.'

'I hope you'll let us give you your revenge some time soon,' said Mrs. Harrison; she seemed disturbed because the game had been so one-sided. Roger suspected that she had arranged it in order to bring him and Sally together and that she was afraid now it had created irritation rather than harmony between them.

'I shall be willing,' Sally answered cheerfully. 'But Roger would probably rather play against me than with me hereafter. I shan't feel hurt, Roger, if you do.'

'You must think I'm a very poor sport, Sally. No, we'll take you and John on again, Mrs. Harrison, and turn the tables next time.'

'I'll promise to be more conservative; I ought never to play after riding to hounds,' Sally said. 'It excites my poor little brain too much.'

Fanny Harrison laughed. 'Choose your own time for the return match, Sally. We'll throw over any engagement we may have in order to give you and Mr. Kendall another chance. — I suppose that now we're going in different directions. Good-bye, Sally; good-bye, Mr. Kendall.'

She seemed in great haste to be off — almost as if she feared to find that they might all be going in the same direction.

The other members of the hunt had all departed. Presently Sally and Roger were walking their horses side by side along an unfrequented road that led back toward the Pendleton place.

'Unlucky at cards and unlucky at everything else, I am,' said Sally, with a whimsical glance at her companion. 'You needn't answer if you don't want to, Roger, but really I'm dying to know who the lady is that stands so in my light.'

'Isabel Ashton.'

'Oh! Now I am surprised! All the gossip I've heard connects her name with that of Mr. Hoyt.'

'Yes, I've heard gossip of that sort too.'

'Now that I know who it is I feel much less piqued than before. It isn't at all as if some little snip had come airily along and whiffed me aside. Isabel's a charmer; I can feel almost reconciled.'

'I shouldn't think it would be at all hard for you to become reconciled.'

'You think I'm very indelicate to bring up the subject,

don't you, Roger?' She gave him a rallying glance, and when he denied entertaining any such thought she said, 'Perhaps it is indelicate. But why shouldn't we be frank and confide in each other if it may help one of us — and not hurt either of us? Now that I'm under no illusion about your intentions I may be able to help you — and you needn't think that a discussion of the topic will hurt my feelings. Or is there any reason why it should hurt yours?'

'It can't hurt mine,' he answered. 'But I won't deny that I do feel uncomfortable.'

'Yes, I thought you did. But you needn't feel so, if you will let me talk with you just as a friend might who wasn't involved in the affair at all. You haven't done me any injury, Roger; you haven't, truly. And now perhaps I can be of some help to you.'

'Of course I shall be grateful for any suggestion, Sally — though I think you're extraordinarily magnanimous to take the slightest interest.'

'Not magnanimous at all. Only I should like to have you think of me as a good sport; is that vanity? And we're old friends, and I believe in helping my friends when I can. Don't answer my questions if you don't want to; perhaps they'll sound impertinent, though you'll know, I'm sure, that I don't ask them out of idle curiosity. Has Isabel any idea, do you think, of the way you feel about her?'

'I am sure she hasn't the slightest.'

'Why do you hold back? Prithee, why so mute, fond lover?'

He laughed. 'Because somehow I haven't yet been able to arrange the right sort of background. I don't mean just the scene for the interview, of course. But I'm looking after her affairs for her; and I exist for her only in my fiduciary capacity. Love and business are like oil and water; they don't mix.'

'I don't know why they shouldn't. Marriage is the most

practical of all relations. In gaining her confidence through your management of her business affairs you have a long start over all other competitors.'

'That very relationship requires me to move more slowly than others.'

'Not at all. Let her see you as something more than a legal adviser or a trustee. She has probably been wondering whether you have any other side. She'll begin to see you as a human being a little more convincingly if people begin to bring you to her attention. Little dinner parties, where you and she are always meeting — all that kind of thing will establish the background that you feel has been lacking, won't it?'

'It would certainly help.'

'Then I haven't a doubt that I can be useful. It's only necessary to breathe a word in the ears of a few friends. Besides, Father and I have decided to open the house in town this winter; perhaps we shall be able to help along the good cause.'

'You're a good friend, Sally. And I don't see that I can ever make any return.'

'No,' she said briskly. 'You certainly can't help me to a husband.'

Silence fell between them. He was thinking with remorse of the disparaging analysis to which he had subjected her in his mind a little while before. Her courage was not only of the hunting field. Yet all the admiration that he felt for her generous and gallant spirit could not break the spell that the music of Isabel's voice and the warm depths of color in her eyes had laid upon him, and as he rode now, contrasting in his thoughts Isabel's voice and laugh with Sally's, Isabel's eyes and smile with Sally's, he knew that for him there could be no going back. One woman had his liking, his gratitude, and his respect; the other possessed his imagination and his heart.

'It's almost a Montague and Capulet romance, isn't it?' said Sally presently. 'I mean, with Isabel working, as I'm told she is, to get Mr. Hoyt elected bishop, as against your father.'

'I haven't given any thought to that complication,' replied Roger. 'The election will be settled without this attachment of mine giving Father the least concern. — Or Hoyt either, if there's any foundation for the gossip we hear.'

'I don't believe she will want to marry the parson, or any parson. I know I should shrink from getting myself into a position in which I should always have to be exemplary. But of course, Roger, it's possible for any woman to make a mistake of that sort, if a man doesn't come along seasonably and prevent her. Don't dawdle; don't delay. The time for action is now, always now. Most military maxims apply equally to love affairs.'

'With you directing it, the campaign takes on new life,' Roger said, and indeed glancing at her he had a momentary thought that were she a man she would have the outward look and bearing of a commander — with her head held high, her thin, firm lips, resolute chin, and trim, erect little figure.

He parted from her at the entrance to her father's avenue. As they shook hands, she smiled and said, 'Good luck, Roger.'

She delivered her horse to the groom at the stable door and walked slowly to the house; she did not try now to check the tears that pressed to her eyes.

Meanwhile, Roger rode on to his farm, cheered by her encouragement and grateful to her for having given such proof of her friendship. Whatever discomfort had lingered in his mind over the unhappy episode in which he had played so ungallant a part was now removed; her frivolous allusions to her own disappointment and her eager interest in advancing his fortunes were proof that she had quite freed herself from what had evidently been a transitory and superficial emotion.

XXVI

On the day preceding that on which the diocesan convention was to be held, Laura announced her engagement to Leonard Warder. There was a family dinner at the Kendalls' that evening to celebrate the event; Leonard, his mother, his brother, and his brother's wife were present, also Mr. and Mrs. Markham, Adelaide and Francis; Dr. Kendall presided jovially, called for speeches from the guests, made three or four himself, and led the drinking of numerous healths in champagne.

'I guess this will be the last fling of this sort that Damon can allow himself,' Robert Markham observed to his sister-in-law after sipping abstemiously in response to one of the toasts. 'When he's bishop he'll have to be absolutely dry.'

'I wish I could feel as confident as he is that he will be elected,' replied Mrs. Kendall.

'Why shouldn't you be confident? I understand there was a little flurry in the parish for a time, some of the youngsters thinking they would like to have a war chaplain for bishop. But all that's quieted down; Damon tells me the Saint Paul's delegation will vote solidly for him.'

'Yes, but there are other parishes, Robert.'

'They're pretty sure to follow the lead of Saint Paul's. Damon has the personality, the social prestige, the financial equipment to qualify as bishop. Those things will all count in the election. The delegates, both laymen and clergy, all want to have some one who will be able to maintain the standard of dignity in a worldly sense that one associates with bishops.'

'I don't like to feel that his chances rest on such considerations.'

'They're the most obvious considerations. I don't say

there aren't others — and, anyway, Mary, whether he's elected or not, he ought to feel happy enough, with a family like this — and two sons-in-law like Francis and Leonard. I would.'

'Things that ought to be are often so very different from the things that are!'

She turned to rescue Leonard from Adelaide's teasing and rallying conversation; Adelaide had been saying, 'I always told you, Leonard, that I could like you like a sister, and it used to annoy you so! Does it annoy you still?'

'You know, Adelaide, I would always rather be annoyed by you than amused by most people,' Leonard had answered. 'Though nothing you can do can annoy me now.'

'Mercy!' said Adelaide. 'Take him, Mother. He's as much as told me that I bore him.'

Across the table Francis's eyes met his wife's; a glance, a smile, of loving sympathy and understanding passed between them. Mrs. Kendall intercepted it and a moment later a similar glance passing between Laura and Leonard. Those silent expressions of mutual trust and affection touched her, and then for a moment isolated her from the company in a mood of bitterness. How many years was it since signals of that sort had passed between her husband and herself? How many years would it be before Adelaide and Francis, Laura and Leonard ceased to exchange them?

Meanwhile, at the other end of the table, Dr. Kendall was having the kind of conversation with Leonard's mother that pleased him best. She was a stately and handsome woman whose black eyebrows and brilliant coloring testified somewhat too obviously to the processes of rejuvenation that she employed, but whose neck was still shapely enough to be worthy of adornment by her necklace of priceless pearls. Both natural amiability and the knowledge that people credited her with the possession of social tact to an uncommon degree caused her always to try to say to those persons with

whom she talked the things that she thought they would most like to hear; in her selection of subjects her judgment was seldom at fault. She had remarked to Dr. Kendall that she thought the engagement couldn't have come at a more auspicious time — on the eve, as every one knew, of his election as bishop. Dr. Kendall had agreed with a smile that if events did not prove her mistaken in her forecast, these two days were indeed happy days for him.

'I do think,' Mrs. Warder continued, 'our Church has maintained better than any other the tradition of electing gentlemen to its important offices. It gives me quite a comfortable feeling about the Episcopal Church.'

'Oh, there's something to be said for the practice of having gentlemen in the commanding positions always,' Dr. Kendall responded. 'But in every church there are doubtless a great many worthy persons doing excellent work whom perhaps you wouldn't by your definition call gentlemen, Mrs. Warder.'

'I suppose that my definition is a narrow one,' she conceded. 'But it does seem to me that the leaders of the Church ought to be people who are at home in any society; otherwise the Church won't have the prestige and usefulness that it should. People like to feel, you know, that religion is something the sophisticated can accept. That knowledge strengthens the faith of the unsophisticated.'

'Quite true; a very shrewd observation.'

'It's because of that that I think you're just the type of man that is needed, Dr. Kendall, and I'm so glad that the attempt to get votes for another candidate in our parish has been abandoned.'

'It would have been rather humiliating to me to lead a delegation that was divided,' Dr. Kendall replied. 'But Mr. Hoyt, who is likely to oppose me in the convention, behaved very decently. As soon as he found that some of his enthusiastic lieutenants had invaded my territory, he promptly called

them off. I think we'll have to admit that was the act of a gentleman, Mrs. Warder.'

'Yes, surely. But many people have an instinct that tells them how to act in big things — and yet they haven't the knowledge that would enable them to appear as gentlemen in the little things. In spite of what you tell me, I'm sure it would be a sad misfortune if your friend Mr. Hoyt were elected. It may be frivolous of me, Dr. Kendall, but I do think that in choosing a bishop it's important to select a man who knows how to entertain.'

Dr. Kendall laughed heartily, as if he found this thought diverting. But he said, 'There's something in that — something in it. Whether I'm made bishop or not, Mrs. Warder, we'll try to entertain properly on the wedding day.'

Late that evening when all the guests had departed, and Laura and Roger had withdrawn to their rooms, Dr. Kendall surprised his wife as they ascended the stairs by slipping his hand into hers and saying, comfortably, 'I guess they won't have any happier life than ours has been, Mary.'

'Oh, I hope they will!' she exclaimed.

He drew his hand away as if it had been hurt. 'Why should you say that?'

'Don't people always hope that their children will be happier than they have been themselves, Damon?'

'If that is all you meant! Yes, of course. But if things go as I expect they will to-morrow, I don't know that I could ask more for any of my children than what I have received.'

'Really, Damon?' She glanced at him with incredulity that softened into affection, and as they entered their room together she gave him unexpectedly a kiss. He was too much occupied with his thoughts to return it.

'Yes,' he said cheerfully, while he took off his coat and hung it over a chair, 'we've had no sorrows, and I've had the satisfaction of finding my work increasingly appreciated. There's no greater satisfaction to a man than that.'

'No, or to a woman either,' replied his wife dryly; she stood in front of her mirror unscrewing her earrings. 'But a woman's audience is usually less appreciative than a man's.'

'If only Adelaide hadn't been so headstrong!' he communed with himself while he undid his necktie and collar. 'That's the most serious disappointment that we've had to suffer — seeing her throw herself away. As time goes on she'll probably feel the contrast between her position and Laura's very keenly.'

'You find such pleasure considering your own life, Damon; don't mar it by giving any thought to Adelaide's. Will you please unhook my dress?'

She presented her back to him; without making any answer to her tart comment be began his fumbling ministrations with hooks and eyes.

Rain, borne on a northeast gale, was pelting at the windows the next morning and streaming in almost horizontal lines against the background of the trees. A sodden sky, a wind howling in the chimneys, a lawn strewn with glistening yellow leaves — the day was autumn in an evil mood, disorderly, sulky, complaining.

'A horrid day for the convention, isn't it, Father?' Laura said to Dr. Kendall at breakfast. 'Why don't you stay comfortably at home and get the returns by telephone?'

'No, I think it's wiser to be on hand and encourage my supporters with my presence.'

'Anyway, you'll telephone us just as soon as you're elected, won't you?'

'I'll get word to you as soon as possible in that event.'

'You mustn't speak as if there were any doubt about it. There isn't, you know.'

All the members of the family accompanied him to the door when he took his departure; Roger grasped his hand and wished him good luck, his wife and his daughter embraced him with unusual heartiness; all three, standing on the

veranda, watched him enter the car and waved him farewell as it rolled away.

After his arrival at Saint John's Church, where the convention was to be held, he had fifteen minutes in which to stroll about among the delegates before the presiding officer called the meeting to order. In greeting the clergymen and laymen that he knew he tried to be cordial and friendly without effusiveness; he was agreeably aware that his appearance created a murmur of interest. He shook hands with Hoyt and exchanged a few pleasant words with him about the unpleasantness of the weather. As far as possible, however, he occupied the few preliminary minutes in attentions neither to those delegates whom he knew to be his opponents nor to those whom he knew to be his supporters, but to acquaintances of whose intentions he was doubtful. Finally, he took an inconspicuous seat among the clerical delegates, and during the routine business that occupied the first hour of the meeting he framed a brief speech of acceptance in case it should seem appropriate for him after the election to make an acknowledgment.

It was the middle of the morning when the chairman announced that the convention would proceed to the election of a bishop and that nominations were in order.

In the front part of the church a tall, angular clergyman in a long black coat rose and addressed the chair.

'Mr. Crane,' said the presiding officer.

The clergyman thus recognized stepped out into the aisle and turned round half way in order to speak directly to the greater number of the delegates. Lanky and rugged, he had a large nose and a long chin; he wore gold-rimmed spectacles and held his head forward a little in the manner of the near-sighted. While he spoke in a slow, earnest manner, setting forth his reasons for nominating the Reverend Caspar Hoyt, Dr. Kendall watched him attentively and listened with interest. He had never before happened to see this clergyman; he

was obliged to admit that the man was an effective speaker.

'It may be,' said Mr. Crane, 'that in this diocese there are priests who are more eloquent in the pulpit than Mr. Hoyt — though I doubt it. There are perhaps priests who through longer and more varied service in the diocese have a wider acquaintance with the people of the Church than Mr. Hoyt. There are priests who have the venerableness of appearance commonly associated with bishops which Mr. Hoyt, a comparatively young man, entirely lacks. There are priests, it may be, who are more profound scholars in theology than Mr. Hoyt. But Mr. Hoyt has alone among all the clergy of the diocese the prestige that comes from exceptionally gallant service in the war. I do not nominate him merely because to him was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery in action. I nominate him first, because by that act he acquired a prestige among us all and especially among the younger members of the Church that no one else can share and that would be immensely valuable to him as bishop; second, because we particularly need to choose for our bishop one who will stand out as an inspiration and a leader to the young, and third, because in Mr. Hoyt as in no other man of my acquaintance are combined breadth of vision, administrative ability, imagination, and spirituality. In closing, let me urge once more on this convention the importance of making a choice that will be received with enthusiasm, not with indifference, by the younger generation. That response, I feel sure, can be obtained only through the election of the Reverend Caspar Hoyt.'

Dr. Kendall thrilled with indignation at the demagogic nature of this appeal; he moved his feet restlessly, longing to take the floor and warn the delegates not to be misled by such specious arguments as those that had just been presented. He hoped that Dr. Dunn in his nominating speech would have the readiness of wit to deprecate an attempt to make ripeness of age and experience a disqualification for service; he looked at

Dunn's bald head that shone some distance in front of him, and he felt impatient with him for not at once rising and saying what he himself could never say. But Dunn remained motionless; and then to Dr. Kendall's astonishment a layman received recognition from the chairman, announced that his name was Woodward, and that he desired to nominate the Reverend Benson Caldwell, of Kingsport. He expressed the opinion that no one city in the diocese should have a monopoly of candidates for bishop; that Kingsport, though it was the second largest city in the State, had never been honored by the election of one of its clergymen to the office of bishop; that in the Reverend Benson Caldwell, Kingsport presented a candidate of sterling qualities, a man gifted with tact and sympathy and insight — one who without any reference to geographical considerations might well be regarded as having a special claim to the honor, and who, when these additional considerations were taken into account, should commend himself favorably to the votes of all the delegates present.

Dr. Kendall, although slightly annoyed at the intrusion of this unexpected candidate, did not regard him as a menace. He knew Caldwell — an amiable man, of mediocre ability; local pride might cause delegates from the Kingsport end of the State to give him their votes on the first ballot, but when that revealed the impossibility of his election, as it undoubtedly would do, there would be an immediate defection.

'Are there any other nominations?' asked the presiding officer.

For a moment there was silence; then Dr. Dunn rose and presented the name of the Reverend Damon Kendall. He expressed his sympathetic appreciation of the reasons which had caused his brethren to propose their candidates, but he believed that as there had been no better judge of the needs of the diocese than Bishop Addison and that as Bishop Addison had made no secret of his desire to have Dr. Kendall succeed him, it would be wise to carry out the wish of that be-

loved and enlightened leader. He was the more convinced of this on account of his long acquaintance with Dr. Kendall, whose executive ability, experience in affairs, and sound and conservative judgment, together with his enviable reputation for eloquence and scholarship, made him eminently fitted to fill the office of bishop.

To Dr. Kendall, the speech seemed disappointingly brief, and lacking in warmth. Dr. Dunn had missed the opportunity to draw the attention of the delegates to the insidious and unworthy character of the appeal that had been made in Hoyt's behalf. It was unfortunate that Dunn had not greater magnetism and force in delivery, and that he was not more quick-witted in perceiving and making use of openings. But, as Dr. Kendall reflected, had not Dunn lacked certain qualities which he himself possessed, Dunn's name as well as his own would probably have been placed before the convention. And, furthermore, as Dr. Kendall continued with increasing philosophy and confidence to reflect, it was never the nominating speech that elected a candidate.

There were no other nominations; the tellers distributed ballots, and the delegates proceeded to the task of voting.

While the ballots were being counted, Dr. Kendall felt himself assailed by a sudden uncontrollable nervousness. His heartbeats became noticeable to himself; he wondered if the honor to which he had aspired were now really within his grasp; waves of exultant confidence alternated in his breast with sinking sensations of doubt. He recited nervously to himself the opening words of the little speech that he had prepared, but he could not sit quiet long enough to finish it; restlessness urged him to his feet. Other delegates were moving about and assembling in little groups for earnest discussion; he left his seat and slipped into the pew behind that in which Dr. Dunn was sitting. He touched his friend on the arm.

'A very handsome effort,' he said, when Dr. Dunn glanced round. 'I thank you.'

'Let's hope that it made a few votes,' Dr. Dunn replied genially. 'I rather thought it would be good strategy to make your nomination the final one. I don't know whether you noticed — I waited to make sure there were no other names presented.'

'I should say I did notice! I wondered if you'd forgotten all about me.'

'Gave you quite a panic, did I?' Dr. Dunn chuckled. 'No, I had you on my mind all right. Got your speech of acceptance all prepared?'

'I've not been so forehanded. Was Caldwell's nomination a surprise to you?'

'Yes. It won't affect the result.'

'I'm of the same opinion.'

Dr. Kendall settled back serenely, but the moment he assumed an attitude of repose the knocking of his heart became again distinct.

The chairman announced that the tellers were ready to report. An immediate hush fell upon the convention. Dr. Kendall, though he looked composed and tranquil, was afflicted with a sudden moisture of the palms. He took out pencil and paper and sat quivering, ready to note down the figures.

'Total number of clerical votes cast,' read the teller, 'one hundred and ninety-one; total number of lay votes cast, five hundred and seventy-three. The concurring majorities necessary to an election are therefore ninety-six, clerical, and two hundred and eighty-seven, lay. The Reverend Benson Caldwell receives forty-five clerical votes, and one hundred and twenty-one lay votes; the Reverend Damon Kendall receives fifty-nine clerical votes and one hundred and eighty-two lay votes; the Reverend Caspar Hoyt receives eighty-seven clerical votes and two hundred and seventy lay votes. There is no election.'

In the moment of silence that followed the reading of the

report, Dr. Kendall grasped the significance of the figures. A sensation of dizziness, almost of faintness, swept over him; he bit his lip, and then felt the hot flush as the blood rushed to his face.

'Gentleman, you have heard the tellers' report.' The chairman was speaking. 'Is it your pleasure that we should proceed at once to a second ballot? — Dr. Caldwell.'

A tall, dark-haired clergyman had risen in the middle of the church.

'Mr. Chairman,' said Dr. Caldwell, 'and brethren.' He spoke in a voice that was full of feeling and with a hesitancy that after the first few words passed. 'I am grateful for the compliment that I have received; I am touched by the kindness of my friends who have thought me worthy of a high and holy office. I hope they will not think me unappreciative if I now beg leave to withdraw my name. The words of the speaker who nominated Mr. Hoyt impressed me very deeply. I agree with him that the most important thing the Church can do is to strengthen its hold on the younger generation. I believe that in this diocese there is no more certain way of doing it than by electing as bishop the man who of all the clergy has the greatest power to stir the imagination of the young — to be an inspiration to them. I have the highest regard for Dr. Kendall's ability, and for his personal qualities; I do not doubt that he would make an admirable bishop. But I shall vote for Mr. Hoyt.'

While Dr. Caldwell was speaking, Dr. Kendall exercised all his power of self-control to keep an impassive countenance. He felt confused, battered upon by overpowering blows, dazed and despairing, but he sat erect and motionless. And, as Dr. Caldwell spoke his final words, Dr. Kendall saw that there was one road open by which he might escape complete humiliation. It was a painful road for him to travel, but he took it.'

'Mr. Chairman,' he said, rising to his feet, and just below

him Dr. Dunn bobbed round and canted his face upward in astonishment.

'Dr. Kendall,' said the chairman, and again a hush fell upon the audience. Dr. Kendall stood, his head thrown back, his face pale, an expression of suffering in his eyes. But he spoke in a firm voice.

'Like Dr. Caldwell, I too am sensible of the great compliment and honor that have been paid me in this convention to-day. Like Dr. Caldwell, I hope I shall not seem ungrateful to those dear friends who have shown their confidence by wishing to place me in the highest office to which I could ever aspire — I hope I shall not seem ungrateful if I beg leave to withdraw as a candidate. Mr. Chairman, if it is in order, sir, I move that the secretary be empowered to cast one ballot for the clerical delegates and one ballot for the lay delegates for the election of the Reverend Caspar Hoyt as bishop of this diocese.'

He sat down, confronted by Dr. Dunn's beaming countenance and outstretched hand.

'Just the right thing, Dr. Kendall!' whispered Dr. Dunn eagerly. 'You rose nobly to your opportunity. You've covered yourself with glory — even if the vote didn't go as we had hoped.'

Dr. Kendall responded with a wan smile.

'You have heard the motion,' said the chairman. 'Is it seconded?'

Dr. Caldwell rose for a brief moment. 'I second it.'

The motion was then put and carried without a dissenting voice.

The secretary reported that he had cast one ballot for the clerical delegates and one ballot for the lay delegates, and that the Reverend Caspar Hoyt was duly elected.

'The bishop-elect is with us this morning,' said the chairman, smiling. 'We shall be glad to hear from him if he is disposed to address us.'

Hoyt rose and stood near the wall, in shadow. 'Mr. Chairman, and brethren,' he said, speaking somewhat haltingly, 'I hope I may justify the choice that you have made — and the generosity that Dr. Caldwell and Dr. Kendall have shown. I feel that you have accepted me as the candidate of the younger generation, even though I can hardly claim to be of that generation. To make religion a more vital and effective force in their lives shall be my chief effort; but I shall try also not to let the older members of the diocese think that it is a matter of comparative indifference to me whether their religious faith continues to be strong and inspiring. I ask for your prayers that I may fulfill worthily the task that you have laid upon me.'

It was nearly one o'clock when Dr. Kendall stepped out of a taxicab and entered his house. He had dreaded this homecoming — had thought on the drive uptown from the church how he should break the news to his family. His wife, hearing him enter, came quickly out of the library into the hall. 'Tell me, Damon —' she began, and then stopped, for the answer to her unfinished question was written in his face.

'Is Laura in?' he asked, coming toward her wearily.

'No, dear; she's just gone out to luncheon.' Mrs. Kendall took her husband's unresisting hand and caressed it while she walked with him into the library. She guided him to his big chair and seated him in it; she stood beside him, still clasping his hand.

'Who was it, Damon?' she asked gently. 'Mr. Hoyt?'

He nodded.

'Was the election very close?'

'It was unanimous.'

'Why! Weren't you nominated at all?'

'Oh, yes.' He sighed and then explained to her. 'There were three of us — Hoyt, Caldwell, and myself. One ballot was taken; Hoyt led, but didn't have a majority. Caldwell, who was low man, then withdrew his name, and then, before

another ballot could be taken, I moved to make Hoyt's election unanimous.'

'That was fine of you, Damon.'

He looked up at her with a wry smile.

'There's no use humbugging you or myself, Mary. There was nothing fine about it. I did it to save myself from being humiliated — swamped on the next ballot.'

She bent over and kissed him and a tear from her eyes fell on his cheek.

'Why, Mary,' he said gently, 'do you feel so badly about it too?'

'No, Damon, no!' she cried. 'As far as I'm concerned I'm happier at having you tell me that — about no humbugging — than I would have been if you'd told me you were a bishop.'

He looked at her gravely, and said nothing.

XXVII

After Sally Winant and her father had opened their town house, Roger found himself meeting her at dinner parties so often that the intention of the hostesses in arranging the encounters was obvious. When one evening he took his seat beside her at a dinner given by his Aunt Harriet, Sally looked up at him and laughed.

'Why don't you enlighten your relatives?' she asked. 'Instead of letting them work away on a false scent?'

'To tell you the truth, Sally,' he answered, 'I'm just naturally too shy and reserved! I can't bare the secrets of my bosom even to Aunt Harriet.'

'I suppose it is hard for you.' He winced a little at the calm comment, for though he knew that it might have been innocently made, with no subtle implication, he felt that there was an edge to it — especially as she did not at once follow it up. But after an interval she said, 'I shall have to set about building some backfires pretty soon. It won't embarrass me nearly so much as it would you. And tell me — how are you fixed for the evening of the tenth? I thought of having a dinner that evening — if I find that your friend is free.'

'I have no engagement; I shall be glad to save the date.'

'Good. And I'll take other measures to vary the monotony for you when you dine out.'

'That sounds rather alarming. What does it portend?'

'Only that the whispering campaign will begin. Good as well as harm can be done in whispers, you know. I will start some pleasant and exciting whisperings.'

'I ought to stand on my own two feet and make my own way.'

'Don't you want me to help you then, Roger?'

Her gay and sparkling manner underwent a change; she looked at him with an expression of appeal in her eyes.

'Of course I want all the help any good friend can give,' he responded heartily. 'And you're one of the best, Sally. When you put it to me like that, I feel ashamed of feeling ashamed.'

Then they both laughed, and Mrs. Markham, who, while carrying on an animated conversation with her partner, had been watching them narrowly over the mound of pink roses in the center of the table, felt that her dinner was a success. She thought, too, how pretty and attractive Sally was, how bright and happy her appearance; glancing round her table she saw among the other young women no one so sparkling, so vivacious, no one so becomingly dressed as Sally in her green and gold gown, no one with a prettier neck or arms than Sally. Her eyes rested with equal admiration and warmer affection on her nephew; it was seldom, she thought — her decorative sense never being dormant — that two such well-matched blonds were drawn to each other! Roger, with his corn-colored hair and moustache and his bright blue eyes and pink-and-white complexion, looked ten years younger than he was.

Sally, too, as hostess a few days later, felt, glancing at Roger, that her dinner was a success. Her thin lips tightened, her blue eyes clouded over for a moment, when she caught the play of eager expression on his face and thought that he looked more animated talking to Isabel than he had ever looked while talking to her. And Isabel was responsive; her gay laugh rang out, she turned to him more eagerly, her face had a lovely radiance. Sally's eyes roved down her long table; all the guests were having a good time; it was just such a dinner as she had always enjoyed — people paired off congenially, talking with animation, showing liking and friendliness for one another; she turned to Arnold Pressey,

whom for the moment she had forgotten, and forced the sparkle back into her eyes.

Yet delightful though Roger found Isabel's company on this occasion, there was nothing in her manner that he could interpret as indicating any special interest in him. That radiance of countenance that Sally had observed with a pang had only shone when Hoyt's name had been introduced into their talk. She told Roger how deeply Mr. Hoyt had appreciated Dr. Kendall's generous action in moving to make the election unanimous.

'He wrote Father a very nice letter about it,' Roger said.

'I know that he was quite touched. He hadn't expected to be elected; he knew that your father had every reason to feel confident, and that the outcome of the first ballot must have been a disappointment to him. That made your father's action all the more sportsmanlike. Bishop Hoyt spoke of it to me more than once.'

'You've been more fortunate than I, then, in seeing him since the election.'

'He looks on me, I think, as a sort of member of his board of advisers — and he's been too funny, asking where and how I think he had better live, now that he's bishop.'

'Have you helped him to decide?'

'I told him I thought a nice comfortable apartment would be the best place for him, and I suggested the Bristol. Then I wrote to Mr. Ward and told him that I wanted him to let Bishop Hoyt have an apartment there for whatever rent the Bishop might feel able to pay. Perhaps I should have asked you to carry on those negotiations; was I intruding on your domain?'

'No, certainly not. The Bristol is wholly your domain, you know.'

'I thought there was no need to trouble you about it. But my little plan fell through. Bishop Hoyt told me a few days later that he couldn't live in any such elaborate place. He

said he wanted something simple and suburban, and he seemed not convinced when I told him a bishop couldn't be suburban.'

'I'm quite sure that Father would agree with you.'

'Does he look on me as an arch-traitor? I can hardly blame him if he does; but truly I didn't do one bit of campaigning for Mr. Hoyt among the Saint Paul's people from the moment I learned your father was a candidate.'

'I don't think he holds any resentment. I don't, anyway.'

'Would you show that you don't by coming to my house to a dinner for Bishop Hoyt? I gave one for him, you know, to introduce him to some of my friends, and now I think I shall have to give one in his honor.'

'Of course I should like to come.'

'That will be fine. I will write to you as soon as I can arrange a date. — Isn't Sally fascinating, in that pink gown? I think she has more spirit and character than any other woman I know.'

Roger was accustomed to have eulogistic comments on Sally's appearance and qualities addressed to him at dinner parties. Obvious in their purpose, they always made him uncomfortable. Isabel's resort to such clumsy propaganda disturbed him; she would not have condescended to it, he felt, had she not already taken alarm at something in his eyes.

That impression was strengthened when at the dinner that Isabel gave for Hoyt, Roger was again assigned to Sally. She laughed and said, 'Well, Old Shuttlecock, what am I to do about you now?'

'I don't blame you for feeling you've exhausted your resources,' he said ruefully.

'You'll soon find they've begun to operate. Have you received an invitation yet from Clara Daniels?'

'Yes — only this morning.'

'And one from Ruth Norwell?'

'That came yesterday.'

'The leaven is working. They are both of them busy little whisperers — and they were all agog when I told them. You never heard anything like the "But, my dears!" Now you will find that I rapidly fade out of the picture, and as soon as other people seem to be simultaneously recognizing what a very nice and fitting arrangement such and such would be — then is your time, my young friend, to put it to the touch. Here's luck.' She lifted her wine-glass, drank, and then turned to her neighbor on the other side who was quietly awaiting her attention.

But the friendly little conspiracy to advance Roger's interests proved, as far as he could judge, rather worse than fruitless. Isabel seemed to have resumed something of her old frigidity of manner toward him. He made attempts to see her at her house, he tried over the telephone to arrange a theater party for her; failing in these efforts, he wrote her a note proposing that with Ted and Clara Daniels they organize a house party and hire the little inn at Webster's Falls for three or four days at New Year's — tobogganing, skiing, skating, snow-shoeing, bridge; wouldn't three or four days of winter sports appeal to her? She replied that nothing could sound more attractive, but that as she had been absent for a week in New York she could not soon desert her child again; she knew he would have no difficulty in finding some one to take her place; had he thought of Sally Winant?

A rejoinder so pointed was a challenge to direct action; no gradual and subtle method of approach to her favor was any longer available. Having arranged a plausible pretext, Roger dispatched a brief note of a professional character — typewritten by his stenographer — requesting Isabel to call at his office.

She arrived; the business was speedily transacted; she had risen to go when Roger said,

'Will you make an appointment to see me some afternoon or evening at your house? There is a personal matter I should like to talk over with you.'

'Why, yes,' she said, looking a trifle surprised. 'Or if you like, I will stop and you can tell me about it now.'

'No, it's purely personal and I talk only business with my clients in the office. But if you would let me come to you for a few minutes some day — it wouldn't take very long.'

'To-morrow then at five.'

Deliberate and clear-cut though his decision was, he ascended the steps of Isabel's house with a premonition that he was about to face one of the most chilling experiences of his life. He found Isabel seated at her tea-table, dressed for the street; her manner as well as her costume seemed designed to remind him that his visit must be brief. When he declined her offer of tea, she made no attempt to facilitate the transmission of whatever message he had come to convey; she merely sat silent, waiting.

He rose from the chair that he had taken only a moment before; he came and stood beside her and bending over, put one hand on the back of her chair, while she drew herself to one side and looked up at him, startled and displeased.

'I've got to tell you, Isabel.' His voice was agitated, low and breathless, unlike his usual calm and even tones. 'I'm in love with you — desperately. I want to marry you. I love you with my whole heart and soul.'

He bent closer to her; his face was flushed, his eyes were eager, his lips trembled.

'No, no!' she exclaimed. 'And do, please, go and sit down!'

'I can't talk to you sitting off there! I must make you understand; I've loved you ever since the first day I saw you after I came back from France.'

'Indeed, I wish you'd sit down. You're the most uncomfortable person I ever knew — always creating one crisis after another in our relations! I don't want to sever relations with you entirely — but really!'

'But,' he insisted, still bending over her, 'is there any

reason why you shouldn't be willing to hear how I feel about you?'

'It's distasteful to me — and I do wish you wouldn't lean over me like this!'

Roger drew back then a little.

'But why is it distasteful to you?'

'I simply don't care for you in that way, and I'd much rather not hear anything about your caring for me.' She resumed an erect position in her chair with a certain air of relief that he had withdrawn himself to a proper distance.

'There's always a chance that a woman may come to care for a man when she finds that he cares for her.'

'Not always.'

'You mean that sometimes the woman already cares for some one else?'

'If you insist on discussing the subject, I would rather discuss other aspects of it. Sometimes there's another woman that the man ought to care for.'

'Why "ought"? You mean Sally Winant, of course. Is a man under an obligation to love forever a woman whom he once wanted to marry, but who married some one else?'

'Perhaps my word wasn't well chosen. But now that Sally is free, and she *is* so nice and attractive! — and perhaps you'd have better success with her now than before. I can't understand your not turning your attention to her.'

'I admire Sally tremendously, but I haven't that sort of feeling for her any more.'

'It will return — especially when you realize that there's no possible hope for you here.'

'Nothing you can say will convince me of that; nothing you can do — unless you marry some one else.'

'Surely you must know that I've wanted to prevent your saying this kind of thing to me. You must credit me with some knowledge of what is possible for me and what isn't.'

'No; I feel that for you all things are possible! And truly,

Isabel, if you could know all that I feel for you, all that I think of you, perhaps you might not think I was so impossible!'

The depth of emotion in his appeal visibly shook her composure.

'I'm sorry you've said all this.' Her voice, that struck the higher notes of gay talk and laughter so musically, was at its sweetest, he thought, when it was soft and low, as now. 'I'm sorry, for I can't give you the slightest encouragement — not the slightest. And it is going to make things so difficult between us!'

'It needn't do that. I can keep my professional and my human side pretty well separated. You won't see the human side on any inappropriate occasion.'

'I shall feel that every occasion is inappropriate!'

'You can hardly mean that. You can't deprive me of a man's inalienable right to fall in love — to be in love — to try to win his love. Until you marry some one else, I shall still be hoping that you will finally consent to marry me.'

She shook her head in silence and rose to signify that the interview was at an end.

'Anyway,' he said, more lightly, 'I hope you will now let me accustom you to the thought of me as a suitor.'

'It isn't an agreeable thought.'

'Not agreeable to know that a man thinks you're the loveliest, most charming, most interesting and delightful person in the world?'

She smiled and said, 'If the man will content himself with showing me that he thinks that.'

He shrugged his shoulders and put out his hand. She took it, but made only the faintest response to his pressure.

XXVIII

Laura was married in the first week of the New Year. On the following Sunday Dr. Kendall announced to his congregation that he had submitted to the vestry his letter of resignation as rector of Saint Paul's. He explained that although he had taken the step with reluctance he had begun to find his work too burdensome; he believed that by making way for some younger man he should serve the parish better than by continuing in a task to which he could no longer bring the freshness and energy that it required; he expressed his appreciation of the loyal support and encouragement that his efforts had received, his deep affection for the members of Saint Paul's, his hope that they might think of him as one with them in spirit even though he should no longer lead them in their prayers or speak to them from the pulpit.

The congregation sat amazed — no one more so than Roger. A glance at his mother told him that to her at least the announcement was not unexpected; a faint smile, whether of satisfaction or of ironical reflection, seemed to hover about the corners of her mouth.

After the service, while Dr. Kendall was shaking hands with the members of the congregation, cheerfully warding off their reproaches and receiving their expressions of regret, Mrs. Kendall and Roger waited for him and were in turn assailed with questions. 'I've seen for some time that the work was wearing on him,' Mrs. Kendall explained. 'I've urged him to come to this decision. — Yes, I know he was most unwilling to do it, but I think he's quite right. He needs a change; I want him to go away for a good rest.'

Roger walked home with his mother and father; he noted that his father's stride was free and vigorous, that his cheeks glowed a healthy pink in the keen air, that his eyes were

bright and his voice hearty as he talked of the decision that he had made.

'My days of usefulness aren't over by any means, Roger,' he declared. 'But I'm going stale in this job. The parish needs new blood, and I need a change. Just what I shall do ultimately I don't know, and in my present mood I don't much care. I'm going to take your mother South; I rather think we shall pass the rest of the winter in Florida. I'll play golf and vegetate and luxuriate, and then by the spring I shall have fixed on some definite course.'

'It's a very good arrangement,' said Mrs. Kendall. 'Especially if Adelaide and Francis will fall in with it in the right way. I want them to come and live with you, Roger, and keep the house open. It will be ever so much more comfortable for Adelaide than passing the next three months in her stuffy little apartment; and she needn't have any special worries or responsibilities.'

'It's all very sudden,' said Roger. 'But I don't see why it isn't a fine idea. Are you going to start South immediately?'

'In my letter to the vestry I wrote that I should remain as long as they felt it was necessary, but that I very much hoped they would make it possible for me to give up my work at once,' said Dr. Kendall. 'They should be able to fill my place temporarily without much trouble. I shall be disappointed if we're not free to start for Florida within the next two weeks.' He spun his walking stick boyishly. 'Think of playing golf under a summer sun in January! Better come along with us, Roger. — Though,' he added with a roguish glance, 'I can well understand that for you there may be superior attractions here.'

Roger dismissed the insinuation with a laugh. 'The only superior attraction that I know is that of duty.'

'Perhaps you can get away for a couple of weeks later in the winter. If you should get married in our absence, we'll for-

give you — if you bring your bride to Florida on the honeymoon.'

Not since the morning when he had set off for the diocesan convention had Dr. Kendall been in such high spirits; even his enjoyment of the festivities of Laura's wedding had been subdued. His good humor embraced Francis who, with Adelaide, came to luncheon, and toward whom his manner was almost invariably saturnine. As for Adelaide, she did not at all disguise her satisfaction at the prospect that the proposed departure of her parents opened before her.

'I like my little apartment,' she said. 'But at just this time I do think it will be nice to have this big house to loll and sprawl around in.'

'And you needn't think we're going to turn you out when we come home,' said her mother. 'I intend to have my grandchild born in this house; I never liked the idea of a hospital as a birthplace; suppose he's President some day — you'll want to have future generations making pilgrimages to view a house, not an institution.'

'You can make yourself perfectly at home here, Francis,' said Dr. Kendall.

Not until the evening, after Dr. Kendall had gone, unaccompanied, to conduct the service at Saint Paul's, did Roger have an opportunity to question his mother in regard to the surprising decisions that the day had brought forth.

'His pride was very much hurt,' she said. 'He felt that his defeat was a humiliation. He has tried to conceal from you and Laura and every one how hard he was hit, but sometimes he has talked freely to me. He said that he couldn't go on preaching to people who had seen him beaten. And having Mr. Hoyt his superior was too hard to bear. I think, too, he has been overwhelmed at realizing suddenly that he has reached his limit of attainment. It's made him feel that he has nothing more to work for or toward. When he felt that, his interest in his work died. He became more and more rest-

less; now, you see, he's done the only thing that could bring him temporary relief.'

'Yes, it may bring him that. But after the change has lost its novelty, and golf as an occupation gets a little tiresome — what will he do then?'

'I don't know, Roger. He hasn't many resources. I could never get him interested in the garden; he isn't a naturalist or an antiquarian — and of course every elderly gentleman who retires from active life ought to be one or the other. I really don't know what he will do.'

'He's on a good many committees, and he will probably take an interest in public questions and write letters to the newspapers and make speeches — and keep himself occupied in such ways.'

'Perhaps. We shall just have to wait and see. If he only had less pride and no ambition! His life now would be happier than he's likely to find it.'

'It may be that he will settle down quite contentedly to the pursuit of ease and leisure,' suggested Roger. 'Perhaps you and he are now about to have your very best time together.'

'I don't at all object to going to Florida,' replied Mrs. Kendall. 'I think it will be quite amusing. And I shall of course come back in April anyway to be with Adelaide.'

The vestry of Saint Paul's reluctantly accepted Dr. Kendall's resignation and acceded to his desire that it should take effect immediately. Within ten days he and Mrs. Kendall were off on their southern journey, and Adelaide and Francis were settled in the Kendall house. The letters that presently reached them were reassuring; Mrs. Kendall intimated that life in the entertaining resort on the west coast of Florida where they had taken up their quarters was proving a balm for her husband's bruised heart. A few days later Dr. Kendall himself wrote that his arrival had been providential; the Episcopal Church had been without a rector all the winter, the pulpit being filled each Sunday by supplies, with results

discouraging to the attendance; he had been asked to take charge of the services, and had found the congregation most interesting and responsive — extraordinarily intelligent, too, considering that many of the millionaires and their wives lacked any background of culture. It was stimulating to feel that he was able to reach these people; that persons who had so obviously been exposed to the grossest material influences should respond so readily to his effort to introduce a new spirit into their religious life.

'Perhaps he'll be a bishop yet,' remarked Adelaide. 'Bishop of Florida — if he and the people down there continue to like each other so much. But poor Mother!'

Indeed, a homesick note made itself heard from time to time in Mrs. Kendall's letters. Her husband had occupation and interest enough in his new environment; he had consented to serve as rector of the church for the remainder of the winter. If they only had a place of their own, where she could have a garden, she would not complain; but she was getting heartily tired of living in a hotel. The letters that both Roger and Adelaide wrote suggesting that she shorten her visit and return home, leaving their father in Florida since he seemed so well content, brought no decisive response — only replies to the effect that she could make no definite plans, that he still needed her.

'I'm really more bothered about your future, Roger, than I am about Mother's or Father's,' Adelaide said one evening when Francis had gone to the 'Times' office and she and Roger were sitting alone together before the library fire. 'You're too comfortable. You need some incentive — like poverty or a wife.'

'I don't seem likely to be blessed with either, do I?' Roger removed his cigar from his mouth to bestow a contented smile on his sister, and then replacing it, added, 'Some men, like Francis, have all the luck.'

'Yes,' said Adelaide, diverted from her subject as Roger had

intended that she should be. 'Francis is poor, and he has an extravagant wife. He does have to work so hard in order to make a living! And I'm afraid I keep pushing him a little too much all the time. But you know I can see that his capacity for work has grown, and his grasp of problems and situations — Uncle Robert was speaking of it to me the other day. Uncle Robert is devoted to Francis; they're very sympathetic.'

'Yes, I've noticed that. I told Uncle Robert that if he was going to be a candidate for senator, he couldn't do better than make Francis his secretary.'

'That was good of you. Would it lead to anything?'

'I think so — whether Uncle Robert wins or loses. He has large interests; as Francis acquired knowledge of them, he would be likely to be given some share in managing them.'

Adelaide listened eagerly while her brother outlined the opportunities that might be open to Francis if he showed himself an efficient secretary.

'Just between ourselves,' she said at last, 'Uncle Robert has already offered Francis that position; and he's been wondering whether he ought to resign from the "Times" and accept it. I'll tell him what you've said; I'm sure it would be wise for him to accept.'

'I think so,' said Roger.

'And now, to come back to yourself and your future —'

'Oh, no, we won't come back to it,' Roger declared firmly. 'There's nothing at all to talk about.'

Yet the progress of his courtship during the winter had not been without interest to himself. He had had the satisfaction of gradually breaking down Isabel's resistance to his attempts to establish informal and friendly relations, and although she never invited him to dine with her unless other guests were present and although she could not be tempted to accompany him on various expeditions that he proposed, she did not decline to see him when he called at her house, she even con-

sented to answer his telephone inquiries as to when she would be at home, she did not refuse to accept the flowers or the books that he frequently brought her, she permitted him to tell her that his love for her was constantly growing even though she offered it no nourishment, she received with apparently good-natured tolerance rather than dislike his expressions of adoration. He had habituated her to the idea that he was an earnest and persistent suitor, if there was any advantage in that achievement — a thing which he was sometimes disposed to doubt. But he observed that to other men who showed an inclination to seek her favor she gave even less encouragement then she did to him; — John Silsbee and Anthony Garrett and Lloyd Henshaw; each one, after making tentative advances, withdrew — convinced apparently that the approach was too difficult. Roger ventured to interpret also as a favorable sign the fact that now when she invited him to one of her dinner parties he was sure not to find Hoyt among the guests. Was it not a sensitive consideration for him that caused her to spare him a meeting with the bishop in her presence?

For Roger had not the slightest doubt that it was Hoyt who, unconsciously perhaps, was the obstacle in his path. Random gossip, transmitted to him by Adelaide, furnished ample corroboration of the statement that his Aunt Harriet had made with regard to the reason for Isabel's interest in having Hoyt elected bishop. From Adelaide he learned that Isabel had not only engaged servants for Hoyt, but that she had also assisted him to choose furniture for the apartment that he had finally rented in the Regent. — 'And Amy Morris says,' continued Adelaide, 'that Isabel owns the Regent and she shouldn't be surprised if she were letting the Bishop have the apartment for a song; I know that the Parkers have to pay a colossal rent for their quarters in that building.'

Or again; 'I hear that Isabel Ashton seldom goes to Saint Stephen's now. Since she's elected her bishop she goes

motoring about the country on Sunday, to whatever church he's preaching in. When he has to visit the other end of the State, she is occasionally to be seen again at Saint Paul's.'

'I suppose that she gets something out of Hoyt's sermons that helps her,' Roger commented indifferently.

'Oh, no doubt,' said Adelaide with a sharp little laugh.

Roger knew that Adelaide disapproved of his turning to Isabel from Sally. Adelaide and Sally had always been close friends; Adelaide had looked on Sally's divorce as offering a providential opportunity to her brother; his failure to seize it disappointed her, and his persistent trailing after a woman who quite obviously was interested in another man seemed to her lamentable. Laura, on the other hand, returning from her honeymoon and opening the house that Leonard had rented on Summit Avenue, not far from Isabel, was sympathetic with her brother's aspirations; she and Leonard tried to promote the match by giving a dinner at which all the guests except Isabel and Roger were married couples. After dinner the other men avoided Isabel as if she were quite without interest or attractiveness, although to Roger's eyes, in her red velvet dress, with the emerald pendant gleaming at her neck, she had never looked more royal. As Roger took a chair beside her in the corner of the drawing-room that they suddenly seemed to have all to themselves, she said somewhat discontentedly,

'Don't you ever get tired of the way people insist on throwing us together? I should like it so much better if they tried to make a match between me and some one else!'

'That's just the difficulty that I hoped you would be ready to discuss with me some time,' Roger replied. 'Of course I have guessed who the some one else is.'

'No, I'm not ready to discuss that at all. I'm sorry I made the remark. It was a very disagreeable remark, and I'm ashamed of it. Tell me about your uncle. I see that I'm to have an opportunity to vote for him. Is he likely to win?'

'He thinks so; otherwise he wouldn't go to the trouble and expense of making the campaign. My young brother-in-law, who has resigned from the "Times" to help him, feels quite confident, but I'm afraid that's partly the enthusiasm of youth.'

'Bishop Hoyt shares his enthusiasm. He told me yesterday that he thought Mr. Markham's announcement was the most encouraging thing that's happened for a long time in this State.'

'That will please Uncle Robert. I suppose a bishop can't take a very active part in a political campaign, but Hoyt's quiet influence will be helpful.'

'Are you going to take an active part yourself?' she asked.

'I've told Uncle Robert I would go out and make speeches for him, if he didn't regard me as a liability. I think there won't be much campaigning of that sort before midsummer. Uncle Robert will have to spend all his time until then making himself known throughout the State; he will have to do a bit of traveling about and speaking. But he won't send his cohort of orators on the road until after the Republican Convention.'

'Don't you look forward to it? I should think it would be a welcome change from cutting coupons for me and the other parasites.'

'I never look forward to anything that means speech-making. Of course, I will do what I can. But why shouldn't your services be enlisted? You've proved yourself a pretty skillful politician; I'm sure you'd be a useful addition to Uncle Robert's organization.'

'He has only to ask me. I'll do any sort of committee work that's assigned to me.'

'I think that with your record of accomplishment in mind he'll appoint you to his board of strategy at once. I will certainly recommend your name.'

'Perhaps I can do something through the organization of service men that I suggested in the other campaign.'

'Of course, you don't know many of those men personally. How would you expect to reach them?'

'I have the list of the organizers of each unit, and I would try to see each one personally and talk with him. If he proved to be a Republican I should try to show him why he ought to be our kind of a Republican and why he ought to be interested in organizing a Markham-for-Senator Club.'

'But that would mean going all over the State.'

'I'm willing to go all over the State. I like to feel that I'm doing something. Perhaps I could help in starting women's committees in the various places too.'

'You're engaged right now; I'll guarantee it!' Roger exclaimed enthusiastically. 'And if Uncle Robert takes my advice, he'll start you out on your tour just as soon as you're willing to go.'

'It will be great fun.' Her eyes sparkled. 'I love to go into all sorts of little towns and talk with all sorts of people. And to feel that I'm doing it not just for fun, but for good government — the very thought gives me a thrill!'

From the farther end of the room, Laura had noted with satisfaction the lively play of expression on Isabel's face, the apparent warmth and eagerness of her interest in talking with Roger. She said to him when he lingered for a moment after the other guests had taken their departure,

'You seemed to be giving Isabel Ashton an extremely good time.'

'That was because we were talking politics. She's very much interested in Uncle Robert's campaign.'

'Oh!' said Laura incredulously; and Leonard threw back his head, laughed loudly, and then said, 'Laura, if I ever have to talk politics to you in order to give you a good time, I'll go and make my home at the club.'

'I should send you there. I hope you thought our dinner was a success, Roger.'

'It certainly was. It was a delicious dinner. And I'm glad

I had the chance to talk with Isabel; she has a plan that I know Uncle Robert will want to make use of. So you can feel that your dinner has been a help to him in his campaign.'

'We didn't give it to help Uncle Robert,' remarked Leonard.

Roger departed, leaving his sister in a puzzled and uncertain frame of mind. Leonard, however, had no doubts.

'Of course, she's going to marry him, Laura. No woman gets that excited look in her eyes that you saw just because a man is talking politics to her. It's ridiculous.'

XXIX

Mrs. Kendall returned from Florida alone. Her husband found that his departure must be delayed; he had not completed the series of Wednesday afternoon lectures that he had undertaken to give before the Women's Club at the house of Mrs. Crenshaw, a lady from New York who was now making her permanent home in Florida; also there were some church matters that he wished to clear up before leaving for the north. But he would follow as soon as possible; he had no intention of being absent at so important a crisis in his daughter's life. In fact, he timed his return so nicely that he had been at home not quite two days when he was introduced to his grandson.

The decision to name the baby Robert Markham Brent caused Dr. Kendall chagrin, the more acute because he fancied that the infant, a healthy little creature with some wisps of flaxen hair, really resembled himself and bore no trace of similarity to its dark and lanky great-uncle. He blamed his wife even more than his daughter for what he could not help regarding as a slight. She had never liked his name; she had even implanted in the three children the idea that it was a rather ridiculous name.

Lack of employment created in Dr. Kendall a restlessness of which his wife early became aware. One morning about a week after the birth of the baby she persuaded him to accompany her into the garden. It was a warm, sunny morning; the jonquils were in bloom; the red spearheads of the peonies were pricking out of the ground; green shoots were springing here and there from the garden mold. Mrs. Kendall hoped to interest her husband in her plants, now when they were beginning to show their tiny heads; she thought that if she succeeded in awakening such an interest in him, it would

continue and increase through the flowering season, and that perhaps in time he might find in the garden an avocation and a resource.

'Do you know the name of this little plant, Damon?' she asked, pointing to a larkspur shoot. 'I'm sure you must recognize the leaf.'

'No,' he said indifferently. 'I may be able to tell the flower when I see it.' The grievance which he had hitherto bottled up suddenly demanded expression. Strolling along the path, without looking at his wife, he asked, 'Why shouldn't Adelaide have named the baby for me?'

'But you know, Damon, your name — we don't any of us like it.'

'She might have called him Kendall. D. Kendall Brent is euphonious. Or merely Kendall Brent. I don't of course resent her affection for Robert, or her desire to please him; but our first grandchild — she might, I think, have honored her family name.'

'Very likely Francis had something to say about it.'

Dr. Kendall shrugged his shoulders. 'Well, it's a small matter. I'm very thankful that the baby is a fine healthy boy and that Adelaide is doing so well. I suppose you will want to remain here for some time now, Mary?'

She looked up from her plants with surprise.

'Of course. Until we go away for the summer.'

'I had a letter this morning that makes me feel I ought to return to Florida. The transient population has all left the place, but there are a good many people who won't come north until June. Now that I've just got the church well organized it seems wrong to abandon it, with the prospect of its languishing again into a decline. There seems to be a real need, too, for the sort of intellectual stimulus and interest that I was able to bring to those people.'

They had been pacing slowly along one of the paths; they came now to a rustic bench. Mrs. Kendall seated herself;

her husband remained standing in front of her, his head bent, his hands clasped behind his back, his feet planted wide apart.

'The letter that made you realize how much you were needed was, I suppose, from Mrs. Crenshaw?'

'Yes,' he said somewhat reluctantly. 'She was trying, I think, to express the sentiment of the church members.'

Mrs. Kendall laughed good-humoredly.

'I realize, Damon, that it's merely one of these affairs that are bound to happen from time to time to every socially disposed and personable clergyman. I've seen it happen to you before, as of course you know, and I'm not seriously disturbed because it's happened to you again.'

'Mary, you are quite mistaken, I assure you.'

'Damon, I know you, and I know Mrs. Crenshaw. She's an attractive widow who's a victim of unemployment. I don't doubt that you have given her the sort of intellectual companionship that she enjoys. It's part of a clergyman's job to assist such people and resist them. I don't know any one who's better qualified than you to do both.'

'You put a quite wrong construction on the woman's interest in her church and her club and her community.'

'Perhaps I do. Even so, I want you to go where you feel that duty beckons.'

'Then you will be ready to go back with me in a few days?'

'Oh, I think you can assist and resist just as successfully if I don't accompany you. I should much prefer to remain here with Adelaide and the baby; I don't fancy the Florida climate for the next month and a half. You will come home to start for the Cape early in June, I suppose?'

'Of course I should do that. I shouldn't think of passing the summer in Florida.'

'I suppose there are some members of the Episcopal Church who do,' mused Mrs. Kendall. 'Though probably not Mrs. Crenshaw. Have you any plans after next summer, Damon?'

'That's something that I want to talk over with you. I'm afraid you don't like Florida as much as I do.'

'You mean, I suppose, that you would like to go down there next autumn and settle?'

'Yes, I should. I think I should never be really happy, living here again. What should you say to such a change?'

'I shall be quite willing to make the change with you, if you feel it will increase your usefulness and your happiness. Only I should stipulate for the privilege of coming home for long visits every spring and autumn — and perhaps I might desert you occasionally even in midwinter. But I could probably arrange things so that you would be cared for comfortably in my absence.'

'I'm delighted to find you so well disposed toward the suggestion.' Dr. Kendall's countenance, which had betrayed signs of uncertainty and uneasiness, cleared cheerfully. 'If for nothing else, because you will learn by next winter how entirely wrong you are about Mrs. Crenshaw.'

Mrs. Kendall's amused laughter rang out.

'Damon, my dear, it isn't of the least importance whether I'm wrong or not about Mrs. Crenshaw. I know I'm quite right about you.'

Dr. Kendall chose to interpret the reply as complimentary rather than disparaging. 'I'm sure you'll enjoy living there ever so much more when we have a place of our own; you'll have a beautiful garden, and orange trees — I doubt if you'll want to spend so much time here as you now think.'

Mrs. Kendall was silent for a moment. 'Somehow,' she said at last, 'the children seem to have gone out of your life so much more completely than they have out of mine.'

'Not at all, not at all!' Dr. Kendall's voice bespoke his sense of injury; he seated himself beside his wife and proceeded earnestly to demonstrate the injustice of her assumption. 'I care for them just as much as I ever did; I'm just as much interested in them, just as eager to help them. If there were

anything I could do for them by remaining here, I should remain, of course. But you see — what can I do? Since I've come back, I'm left most of the time to my own devices. Roger has his business affairs which occupy him and which he keeps to himself; if he has any love affair, he keeps that to himself also. Laura's absorbed in her new husband and Adelaide's absorbed in her new baby. You are naturally able to get closer to Adelaide in this situation than I am. What can I do?'

'I suppose it's with you as it is with all fathers after their children grow up,' replied his wife. 'It isn't their fault, and it isn't the children's fault, but their interests do tend to exclude each other. But I think if the mothers find themselves shut out, they have only themselves to blame. You have your Mrs. Crenshaw who needs you — I speak of her, Damon, not as an individual but as a problem — and I have my children whom I need.'

'I don't agree. And besides — don't you need me? Don't I need you?'

'Do you?' Mrs. Kendall laughed again, held her husband's hand a moment, and then dropped it as she rose from the bench. 'Let me know, Damon, after you've been in Florida alone for a month.'

Ten days later, the letter that she received from him left her in no doubt of the need for his services that he had discovered on his return. The members of the church were overjoyed at his reappearance and were already pressing him to accept a permanent position as rector. The proposal had also been put before him that he should give two courses of lectures the next winter — one before the Women's Club on English and American Poets, the other on Socialism in Various Forms, before a Discussion Club that was to be organized among the winter residents and that was to include both men and women. If he accepted these invitations he would have to look forward to a working summer at the Cape,

preparing some of the lectures. He would, however, make no decision until he had received word from her.

Mrs. Kendall wrote at once, advising him by all means to accept every invitation that came to him. A subsequent letter informed her of his negotiations for the purchase of the Hayden property — a comfortable house, five acres of good land, three acres planted to oranges which would bear in another year. 'Roger and the girls ought to give me every encouragement,' he wrote. 'There's no income tax in Florida, and no inheritance tax. The family fortunes won't suffer by this move.' Mrs. Kendall accepted that assurance readily enough; her husband seldom made an injudicious investment. She took no unreasonable alarm over the fact that the Hayden place was adjacent to the Crenshaw estate; his pleasure in admiring women and being admired by them had never led him to the verge of indiscretion; it would not do so now. She urged him to make whatever arrangements seemed to him best, but expressed the hope that it would not be necessary for her to undertake a trip to Florida before the autumn, when of course she would accompany him to his new home and get him comfortably established in it.

Roger, Adelaide, and Laura all agreed that their father was taking the wisest course. 'So long as it's going to make him happy — if it won't make Mother unhappy,' said Adelaide.

'You can trust Mother; she won't permit it to do that,' Roger replied.

The passing of one who had been the dominant figure in the family life into remoteness and obscurity seemed to no member of the family either melancholy or important. Dr. Kendall had perceived the truth when he had said to his wife that he was no longer needed in the lives of his children.

XXX

With four candidates for the Republican nomination for Senator in the field, all of them speaking softly of one another and relying on persuasiveness, rather than combativeness to win them votes, a large campaign fund and campaign workers of engaging personality and methods became factors of the greatest importance. Two of the candidates, lacking sufficient financial strength, withdrew early from the contest. Those who remained, Robert Markham and Harold Pratt, the State Treasurer, had equally long purses, were equally willing to spend money freely, and divided pretty equally between them the following of professional party workers and politicians. Markham was on the whole more successful than Pratt in enlisting the aid of intelligent and enthusiastic novices.

Isabel Ashton frequently visited his headquarters, to report concerning the Markham Clubs of Young Voters that she was organizing in various communities. The candidate and his secretary came to regard her as one of their most useful workers; their praise of her was sweet to Roger's ears even while it renewed in him a fretful discontent because it was Francis or his uncle, not himself, with whom she talked, and who was stimulating her interest and zeal. He was leading an unsatisfactory, desultory life — helping unofficially with the campaign, carrying on the affairs of his clients, making frequent trips to the farm at Bolton, where the Millers were now prospering and where he directed the operations on the apple orchard — pruning, scraping, grafting, spraying, cultivating; he seemed to be always turning from one occupation to another, yet the one which he hoped would bring him into closer companionship with Isabel was that in which he was constantly having to deal with the most unprofitable

persons. Applicants for jobs, people with axes to grind and ingenious trading proposals to make, eccentric enthusiasts who had novel schemes and arguments for influencing voters were passed on to Roger to be dealt with.

One afternoon when both Markham and Francis were absent from the city and Roger had assumed charge of the headquarters, Isabel entered. Roger abandoned the speech that he had been dictating and rose eagerly; her sudden appearance flashed beauty and excitement into a dull day.

'Am I interrupting?' Isabel asked. 'You looked as if you were working very hard!'

'I certainly was working hard. I was trying to knock out a speech — and Miss Watson will testify that's hard work for me, won't you, Miss Watson?'

Miss Watson, a young woman with a keen face and shrewd eyes, said that if it was, it was all the easier for her to take the dictation.

'When and where are you to make the speech?' Isabel asked.

'To-morrow evening, before the Ward 17 Republican Club.'

'I won't disturb you for long. I stopped in just to leave a list of names with Miss Watson. I've been going round through the towns in the Nyasset Valley, and I think we may do pretty well there.'

She took some papers out of her handbag and gave them to the stenographer.

'I think that if Mr. Markham would sign a letter to each one of these people saying that he has heard through me of their interest in his campaign and that he hopes that they will be interested in the accompanying circular, they would appreciate it,' Isabel said. 'I'm pretty sure that some of them, at least, will become active workers.'

'I will have the letters all ready for him to sign when he returns to-morrow,' said Miss Watson.

Isabel turned to go.

'Now I will leave you to finish your speech,' she said. 'Or,' she added, touched by the disappointment that showed in Roger's eyes, 'should you like to rehearse it with me for audience?'

'Oh, I could hardly do that — I don't know, though,' he said, ashamed of his self-consciousness. 'If you're good enough to listen and criticize, I'll try.'

She sat down; Miss Watson got out her notebook and pencil; Roger, gazing over Isabel's head, now at the engraving of Lincoln and now at that of Roosevelt on the opposite wall, embarked upon his speech. His sense of awkwardness soon passed; Isabel's presence stimulated him; without fixing his eyes upon her he was aware of her sympathetic interest; when he finished with an appeal to his hearers to choose as their representative in the Senate a man whose record of service to the people of his city and his state was a guarantee of his ability to render a great service to his country, Isabel clapped her hands.

'Splendid! I think Mr. Markham must send you all over the State. You mustn't be restricted just to Ward 17!'

He was quite boyish in showing his pleasure at her encouragement. 'You really think it's all right?'

'I wouldn't change a word of it.'

She rose to take her departure; Roger glanced at his watch.

'Half past four; there's no reason, is there, why I should stick around here any longer, Miss Watson?'

'No, Mr. Kendall; I don't see why you should.'

'My car is just round the corner,' said Isabel. 'Can I take you home?'

'I thought of going out to the Country Club and playing a few holes of golf. If you'd leave me at Summit Avenue —'

She felt in an odd and novel way tenderly disposed toward him; it had been so hard for him to stand up and make his speech just before her and Miss Watson, and yet he had done

it so nicely! And his childish enjoyment of her praise had touched her; she did not want to spoil it now by administering any rebuff. It would do no harm to let him have a thoroughly pleasant afternoon.

When they approached the corner of Summit Avenue, where he intended to take the trolley car to the Country Club, she said, 'It's only a few minutes' drive to the Club; I'll run you out there.'

In spite of his evident gratitude she regretted her kindly act when she stopped the car in front of the clubhouse veranda before the interested eyes of a number of her acquaintances who were seated there having tea. Sally Winant, sitting with Arnold Pressey at a small table close by the rail, waved to her.

'Can't I persuade you now to get out and play a few holes with me?' Roger said, as he stepped down from the car.

'No, thank you; I must fly home.' She was almost brusque in her manner; she started the car quickly, hoping that he had not noticed the flush of embarrassment that delivering him at the clubhouse in the presence of so many witnesses had brought to her face.

Roger mounted the steps of the veranda and paused for a word with Sally.

'Nice new chauffeur you have,' she said, looking up at him mischievously.

'We've been working together on Uncle Robert's campaign,' Roger explained, 'and she was good enough to give me a lift. Have you been playing?'

'Yes; Mr. Pressey and I have made an agreement. He's to give me golf lessons and I'm to give him riding lessons. Only he's a much more apt pupil than I am.'

'Oh, no; not at all,' Pressey interjected hastily. 'You're doing splendidly, Mrs. Winant.'

'But not so well as you. Mr. Pressey's going to hunt with us at Bolton next autumn, Roger.'

'Fine!' said Roger, noting the doubtful expression on Pressey's face.

Isabel, driving home, experienced a revulsion of feeling against Roger. She not only wished that she had let him make his own way to the Country Club, but she wondered why for even a moment she should have had the sense of affection and admiration for him that had temporarily possessed her after she had listened to his rehearsal of his speech. She ought never to have given the gossips of the clubhouse veranda reason to think that she was quite complaisant in her attitude toward his attentions.

She drove up to her house just as Bishop Hoyt was turning away from the door. At the sight of him her eyes brightened; she called, 'How lucky! I should have been so disappointed to miss you!'

She gave orders that tea should be served in the garden; she walked with him there, happy in his companionship, delighted at his interest in her flowers, responsive to his appeals to be enlightened concerning the song-birds that were making themselves heard though invisible in the trees. 'When I was last here,' he said, 'it was a little later in the season, and it was all lilies and larkspurs. Now it's peonies and tulips — more brilliant, but I think I like the later flowers better.'

'I do,' she said. 'But still I like them all. And most of all at this hour, with the long shadows, and the birds singing. There will be less music when we have the lovelier flowers.'

While they sat together in the pavilion, she talked about the work she had been doing in Mr. Markham's behalf; he was amused to hear that she had been pursuing with some success the heads of the War Veterans' Units, the organization which she had helped to create six months before for a different purpose.

'If you can elect a Senator as well as a bishop within a year, all the politicians in the country may well come to take lessons of you,' Hoyt said.

'My contribution, of course, is very small,' she replied; and she told him of the excellent work that Francis Brent was doing, and of the way in which Roger Kendall had begun to interest himself in the campaign; she described his reciting his speech to her, and as she did so all her irritation against Roger vanished, and she found herself thinking of him in a friendly and gentle spirit.

'I haven't seen him or even heard from him for months,' said Hoyt. 'I hope he doesn't think that he has less in common with the bishop than he had with the chaplain.'

'He doesn't seem to me a person who would be at all overawed by a title or an office,' said Isabel.

'I should be sorry to overawe any one; in fact, I can't imagine myself doing it. I'm glad the feelings and manners of my friends toward me haven't changed. I was quite touched the other evening by a visit that an old clergyman friend of mine paid me.'

He paused. 'Tell me about it,' Isabel encouraged him.

'I should like to.' He looked at her with a wistful expression in his eyes that puzzled her, it seemed so unregardful of herself, so obviously concerned with an inner vision. 'Last Thursday was the second anniversary of my wife's death. I was sitting alone in the evening when the old man came — the old clergyman who had married us twenty years ago. He brought a little plant in his hands — he had remembered. We sat together for an hour, recalling scenes and episodes in which she had been the central figure; he had known her as a girl, you see — even before I had known her. At last we were silent, and then after a while he said — first expressing the hope that I wouldn't be hurt by what might seem in the circumstances a strange remark — he said this: "I know how you loved her and how she loved you, and yet I hope that you will marry again — some one who will lift you out of your loneliness and help you in your work. I am sure that she would wish it too."'

Hoyt looked off across the garden; the silence grew prolonged; Isabel's heart quickened its beat; she felt that he was waiting for her to speak, that he had gone as far as he could go unaided, that she must help him. That was what she most wanted to do — to help him always. Her heart yearned to him in his sadness and his loneliness, emotion seemed to fill her throat chokingly; tears came to her eyes.

'I think that he was right; I am sure that she would wish it,' she said in a low voice.

Still looking across the garden, he shook his head, slowly, definitely. Bewilderment and dismay subdued the swelling emotion in Isabel's breast and dried her eyes.

'No,' he said. 'It would be impossible. I want to bring her a love as undivided as that which I always gave her; I couldn't do otherwise. It's such a little time to wait — measured with eternity.'

She murmured, 'Yet people do — both men and women — who have loved perhaps just as much.'

'I know.' He glanced at her and looked away again. 'It's right for people in such a case to do what they feel is right. I couldn't be happy; I should feel all the time that I had hurt her — and been untrue to myself.'

'Perhaps,' said Isabel, 'you are not quite kind to her now in assuming that it would hurt her to see you happy — and making another woman happy.'

'It's just personal instinct,' he answered. 'It's not a thing that I can reason about convincingly. It's simply a thing that I feel.'

'Oh, Bishop Hoyt,' Isabel laughed gently, 'I'm more sure than ever that women reason more closely than men!'

'It may be so. But reason and faith can't always travel hand in hand.'

'But that is why men and women were made — so that reason and faith could always travel hand in hand.' She spoke lightly and smiled as she added, 'I like your old clergyman; I still think he gave you good advice.'

'Perhaps I shouldn't have troubled you with such a very personal matter.' Hoyt rose, and Isabel rose also and stood with her hands clasped in front of her, looking at him with the softness of a summer evening in her eyes. 'I sometimes want to talk about my wife; you make it easy for me to talk with you. If I were to follow my old friend's advice, Mrs. Ashton, for me it would never be "glad confident morning again." It's always that now.'

He held out his hand; she took it; they stood for a moment looking into each other's eyes, pressing each one the other's hand. She said good-bye to him at that spot; she knew that however often they might meet henceforth he would never again open his heart to her, or she hers to him.

After he had gone she paced slowly up and down the garden paths, seeing no flowers, hearing no songs of birds, her eyes dimming and clearing and dimming again, her ears shaping and reshaping the sound of his voice. She knew why he had come to deal her this unkindness. Her eyes, her manner, her eager interest must again and again have betrayed to him the inner truth of that feeling which she had tried to deny even to herself until he should beseech her to acknowledge it, but even that betrayal, even his own sense of being wedded to one woman for all eternity, supplied no motive for his unburdening himself as he had done. The determined effort of so many people to bring her and Roger Kendall together, the gossip that united their names, had of course not escaped him; it was as Roger's friend, even though without Roger's prompting or knowledge, that he had acted.

From an upper window of the house came her boy's call summoning her to bid him good-night. She waved to the little figure and answered in a clear and cheerful voice, 'Yes, darling, coming — coming right away.'

XXXI

ROBERT MARKHAM had arranged with the Associated Press to have a special telegraph service installed in his house for the evening of the primary election. He had invited all the members of the Kendall family and all the members of his local staff of helpers to come in after dinner and share with him whatever emotions the election returns might arouse. When Dr. and Mrs. Kendall, Adelaide, Francis, and Roger arrived, Mrs. Markham welcomed them in the hall; she was flushed and tremulous with excitement.

'My dears,' she said, 'I don't really dare to hope, but so far, if you'll believe it, we're ahead!'

In the spacious library, off the hall, the clicking of a telegraph instrument was to be heard, and then the voice of the operator announcing, 'Charlton gives Pratt 237 votes; Markham 272 votes.'

'Hear that, Aunt Harriet?' cried Francis. 'As goes Charlton, so goes the state!'

'I know you'll like living in Washington, Harriet,' said Mrs. Kendall. 'And how I shall enjoy visiting you!'

'You mustn't let me hope, any of you.' Mrs. Markham ushered the family into the library, where her husband who, with Miss Watson, had been studying the sheets of papers on the table at which the telegraph operator sat, came forward to greet them.

'We're running neck and neck,' he said. He spoke in his usual unemotional manner, but his eyes were shining eagerly. 'About one third of the returns are in and I have a lead of some 2500 votes.'

'How are the returns distributed — about equally among the cities and country districts?' Francis asked.

'Yes.'

'Then your lead is more likely to increase than diminish.'

'Kingsport hasn't been heard from yet or Holbrook. In this city, with 210 precincts reported out of 319, I'm running ahead of Pratt by 1400 votes.'

'Windham gives Pratt 950, Markham 789,' announced the operator.

'Oh, dear!' exclaimed Mrs. Markham. 'Don't tell me that's the beginning of the end.'

'Charge it up to me, Aunt Harriet,' said Roger. 'Windham was one of the towns I spoke in last.'

Markham took his seat at the desk near the operator's table, where with Miss Watson's help he had been tabulating the returns.

'Cigars and cigarettes over there,' he said. 'Help yourselves, everybody.'

Laura and Leonard arrived, a few minutes later William Carter and Henry Milburn, who during the last week had joined the staff of speakers, and finally Isabel Ashton. She was in full evening dress, the only member of the party so ceremoniously attired; she explained to Mrs. Markham with some embarrassment that never having attended a similar function she hadn't known quite what to wear, but had at last decided that as it would probably be the most festive and jubilant of occasions she had better put on the best she had.

'It was a nice thought, my dear,' said Mrs. Markham, 'and we're grateful to you for it.'

Roger felt especially grateful. He looked admiringly at her pretty neck, her handsome arms that showed white and soft against the dark crimson of her dress. He watched her for a few moments while she stood talking with his father; he saw an expression of geniality come into his father's face; and then he came forward and had the satisfaction of knowing that his father was disposed to resent his intrusion.

A few moments later Isabel was sitting with him on the

sofa at one side of the fireplace, exchanging campaigning experiences in the intervals between announcements. As the evening wore on, however, their talk like that of the others in the room almost ceased. The margin by which Markham led his opponent had shrunk instead of increasing. By ten o'clock three quarters of the towns and cities in the state had reported; Markham's lead then was 1700 votes. One third of the local precincts and half of the precincts in Kingsport had not been counted; and the returns from the eastern section were slow in arriving. In the next half-hour the situation improved. The votes from a number of small towns pushed Markham's lead again up a little above 2000.

'It all depends on what the missing precincts here and in Kingsport have done,' Francis said.

The little group sat in anxious suspense. Adelaide had long since put aside her sewing and had resorted to cigarettes. Markham had passed the cigars round among the men three times; the room was heavy with smoke. Whenever the telegraph instrument began to click, Francis and Miss Watson were instantly at the operator's side, hanging over him while he transcribed the message. Markham himself had left the desk and sought a comfortable armchair, but he held his pad of paper and pencil always in readiness.

'Kingsport,' cried Francis, looking over the operator's shoulder; Mrs. Markham groaned, 'Oh, mercy!' and every one else sat in breathless silence. Then Francis read exultantly, 'One hundred and thirty-five precincts, Pratt, 18,095; Markham, 20,031. — That does it, Uncle Robert, that does it!' The others began to clap, but instantly Francis raised his hand and hushed the applause; another message was being received. 'Kingsport, total vote, Pratt, 33,147; Markham, 34,939. Markham leading Pratt in the state by 3700 votes.'

'That's better than I figure it!' exclaimed Markham.

'Those figures are probably nearer right than yours; they're from the Associated Press,' said Francis.

'My dear friends,' said Mrs. Markham, 'let's go into the dining-room and eat some supper. I feel as if I couldn't stand any more of this without food.'

'Oh, Aunt Harriet!' pleaded Francis. 'It's not quite half-past ten yet. Wait just a little longer. We ought to have a report at any moment from our own missing precincts.'

'Yes,' urged Laura, 'let's wait, Aunt Harriet. I couldn't eat while I'm still in suspense.'

Within five minutes the report came. 'Here we have it,' announced Francis. 'Our missing precincts heard from — one hundred and nine of them — and they give Pratt 13,253; Markham 14,861.'

In the dining-room, after the successful candidate's health had been drunk in champagne, Markham expressed his gratitude to his fellow-workers. He said that he would not urge them or expect them to continue to work for him so arduously as they had done, but that he would remind them he had won a nomination only, not an election, and he hoped they would give such support as they could to the campaign against Senator O'Callahan on which he must now enter. He wished them all to reserve the evening of election day for another party that should be similar to this festival; he had just about enough champagne left in his cellar for such a party, and he could think of no happier occasion and no more agreeable society for the dispensing of it.

For each one of the guests as they bade him good-night he had some individual and gracious word. To Dr. Kendall he said, as he held his hand, 'You don't know how I appreciate your coming all the way from the Cape to vote for me, Damon; it was a brotherly act.'

On the drive home, Dr. Kendall with an effort complimented Francis on the effective campaign that he had assisted in organizing.

'We were fortunate in having some effective campaigners,' Francis replied. 'Roger, for instance, Mrs. Ashton —'

'Yes, I gathered that she made a good many votes. It was unlucky for me that in my campaign she worked against me. Perhaps if she had known that I was to be a candidate she wouldn't have been so active, and the result might have been different. Small things often have far-reaching consequences.'

'Roger would agree with you, I'm sure,' said Adelaide. 'If he could only have got his attractive client working for you, Father, instead of against you, you'd undoubtedly be bishop to-day.'

'She seemed to feel some contrition.' Dr. Kendall gave one of his short, ironical laughs. 'She wished I were to deliver my course of lectures on the poets here instead of in Florida next winter.'

'Perhaps she'll still have the opportunity to hear many a lecture from you, Father dear,' said Adelaide.

'Eh?' said Dr. Kendall, puzzled by the remark; but before he could pursue his inquiry the car stopped in front of his house and the subject passed from his mind.

XXXII

SENATOR O'CALLAHAN, fighting for reëlection, went down to defeat along with his party. Markham was swept into office on the Republican wave of victory.

The guests who assembled at his house on election night experienced no such thrills as those which the returns from the primaries had given them. Before nine o'clock the satisfactory outcome of the election was beyond dispute, the only question being by how many votes Markham had run behind the Republican candidate for President.

'Of course you ought to be running ahead of everybody else on the ticket,' said Francis. 'But I'm not feeling really unhappy this evening.'

'I should think not,' exclaimed his wife. 'You'll need Francis in Washington, won't you, Uncle Robert?'

'I wouldn't trust myself there without him.'

'It isn't quite decent, Adelaide, to hold your uncle up for a job the very night he's elected,' said Francis.

'I know, but I like to be able to feel that there's something ahead for us.'

'You don't need to give yourself any concern, Adelaide,' said her uncle. 'I am sure that there will always be something ahead for Francis.'

'You haven't something for me, have you, Mr. Markham?' asked Isabel. 'I shall feel quite lost, I'm afraid, with no more campaigning to do.'

'I have no such feeling,' said Roger. 'I hope that I shall never have to be so active in any campaign again.'

'What are you going to do now?' she asked. 'Go right back to your office work?'

'No. I'm going to pick apples. I haven't done anything yet about getting in my apple crop at Bolton, and I'm going to

forget politics and law and trust estates and just pick apples.'

One afternoon a few days later, Roger paused from harvesting Baldwins and made himself comfortable in the crotch of two branches at the top of an old tree. He surveyed his orchard slope with a satisfied sense that nowhere in the countryside was there a more pleasant sight; the long ladders leaning in the trees, the heaps of red and golden fruit on the ground, and the barrels standing about, filled to the brim, the boys with bags slung at their hips or baskets hung on their arms descending and ascending, calling cheerfully to one another; the sunlight slanting among the trees and making long shadows; the birds flitting about in a busy and bustling manner. There was an Indian summer stillness and warmth; Roger loosened the collar of his flannel shirt and stretched himself lazily along the convenient limb. From the field beyond the orchard slope came the rattle of chains as young Miller drove his plough.

One of the boys whom Roger had hired to help him get in the crop disturbed his pleasant relaxation. He stood under the tree and called,

'There's a lady in an automobile wants to buy some apples, Mr. Kendall.'

'Why didn't you let her have as many as she wants?' Roger asked, annoyed at being caught napping by his helper. 'You know the price.'

'I offered to sell her some, but she said she wanted to trade with you personally — says she knows you.'

'Where is she?'

'Out in the road — sitting in her automobile.'

Roger descended slowly to the ground, buttoned his collar and wiped the sweat from his face. Then he went down through the orchard toward the road.

He came in sight of the touring car that was drawn up close beside his fence; a moment later he saw that the person sitting at the steering wheel was Isabel. Excitement mingled

with diffidence; he looked at his grimy hands and soiled overalls and thought of his tousled hair. He did not dream that appearing before Isabel in such an unaccustomed guise he might present hitherto unperceived attractions.

She called to him merrily as he came near: 'I drove out in search of apples. Have you any that you can let me have?'

'Come in and look round and take your choice,' he answered.

He helped her to clamber over the low fence — held her hand while she took a flying leap from the top. The shock of alighting tipped her blue velvet hat at an angle, but, even while she was readjusting it and retying her veil, he was aware that she was scrutinizing him with a certain interest.

'You don't look a bit like yourself,' she said. 'I've always thought of you as a rather elegant city man; you seem out of character.'

'Then it must be that you're seeing me for the first time in my true character. I should like to spend much more time out here, doing this kind of work, than I'm able to.'

'You have quite an orchard, haven't you? Did you set out all those little trees?'

'Yes. Not all of them with my own hands, though I must have planted nearly half of them myself. What I'm most interested to see is how the grafts that I made this year will turn out. I never did any grafting before.'

'You must let me have some of those red apples — and some of those russets, to take home with me. I oughtn't to keep you from your work.'

'Apple-picking is a leisurely occupation; it doesn't suffer from interruptions — certainly not from pleasant ones.'

'It must be fearfully tedious work,' she remarked as she glanced at the heaps of apples under the trees.

'Not at all!' He discoursed enthusiastically about it as they strolled along. 'There's always the spice of adventure in it — the big apple on the end of the limb to tempt your

ingenuity and daring. Then again there's the pleasant satisfaction of accomplishing large results with little effort, when you get a comfortable seat on a thick limb with a bushel or two of fine apples hanging close in front of you. And there's the fun of being off the ground, up in a tree; I'm still boy enough to enjoy that.'

'Are you really?'

'Why,' he insisted, 'anybody that tries picking apples can't help getting a lot of fun out of it. It's full of little excitements, and it has its real disappointments. Sometimes you're able just to tickle a perfectly splendid apple with your finger tips, and you stretch and strive and finally get just grip enough on it to break it from its stem but not enough to hold it; you feel it slip away and hear it thump to the ground — it's almost heartbreaking. On the other hand, sometimes after you've decided that a branchful of fine apples is absolutely unattainable, you cleverly work out a new approach and bag the whole lot. You have the feeling that you've achieved a military triumph — outwitted an enemy.'

'And is all this your farm?' Isabel looked round at meadows and pastures.

'Yes, but I don't farm it myself. My only interest is the orchard. I have quite a nice little addition to the farmhouse though that is all my own. Wouldn't you like to walk down there and have a look at it?'

'I should take you away from your exciting games with your apples.'

'Oh, there are other excitements that I enjoy.'

She made no reply to that remark, but he thought — he could not be sure — that her eyes gave the faintest token of appreciation. He talked quite prosaically of the satisfaction that he took in his week-end retreat — what good people the Millers were, and how excellent a cook was Mrs. Miller. Engaged in such amiable chat they passed round the farmhouse and stood before the new and spacious wing.

'Would you come in?' he suggested, somewhat shyly.

'Oh, no; I'll just look through the windows.' She peered inside. 'What a very nice living-room! It looks too cozy and comfortable for just a man!'

'Of course my week-ends would be ever so much pleasanter if you would accompany me on them.'

She turned from the window and faced him with an expression struggling between consternation and amusement.

'Of all the suggestions!'

'Oh, look here, Isabel, you know —'

Then she broke into laughter.

'Yes, of course I know what you were trying to say.' She looked at him, and the expression of amusement on her countenance grew more puzzling, more disturbing. 'If I were to spend the week-ends with you here, should I always see you with a grimy face?'

'I didn't realize —' With chagrin he snatched out his handkerchief, but she said, 'Never mind, Roger; *I* don't. In fact, I rather like it.'

XXXIII

News of the marriage of Sally Winant and Arnold Pressey reached Roger and his wife in Rome, where they passed the month of March. They moved northward with the spring; the first week of May found them in Paris; one morning, entering the Gare du Nord to take a train to Saint-Quentin, they met the Presseys face to face — Sally in a lilac-colored suit and hat, with something of the freshness and sweetness of lilacs in her face; Arnold Pressey, quite debonair with his perked-up moustache, white spats, and smart walking-stick.

'But you're not leaving Paris, just as we're arriving!' Sally exclaimed, after the first excited greetings had passed.

'We're coming back to-morrow,' Isabel answered. 'Won't you and Mr. Pressey dine with us to-morrow evening at the Meurice?'

'We shall be delighted, shan't we, Arnold?'

'Yes, that will be fine,' Pressey agreed.

'It's the first time in my life I've ever been abroad with a really educated person,' said Sally, slipping her hand inside her husband's arm. 'You've no idea now interesting it makes everything! Buildings and history and pictures and carvings — there's nothing this little man doesn't know!'

Pressey laughed and said that Sally always liked to make a good story. He seemed to have gained in poise of manner; Isabel commented on it afterwards to Roger. 'Sally's giving him courage, I believe,' she said. 'Pushing him forward and letting people know about his accomplishments — she's doing it just to get him over that shrinking diffidence. You'll see; she'll make the very most of him.'

That afternoon Roger led Isabel to Jim Ashton's grave. 'Come for me after half an hour,' she said; and he left her

standing with the flowers that she had brought, still in her hands.

When he returned to her, she was still standing at the foot of the grave; but the flowers were lying wreathed against the headstone. She put her hand out and drew him to her.

'Poor Jim!' she said. 'I'm sorry I had such harsh thoughts about him. I hope he's forgiven me. I was so unkind — not to do anything about that memorial that I planned! We'll make those playgrounds, Roger, when we get home.'

'Yes,' he said.

'Standing here among all these graves — it's made me feel how petty and cruel I've been — how terribly unworthy I am. He was my husband after all — just as much as you are, Roger dear. And yet I was cruel to him in my heart.'

'No, dear, you weren't — you couldn't have been — or at least only as kind people sometimes have to be. To be kind is sometimes to be cruel; to be cruel is never to be kind.'

'That may be true of persons,' she said, after a moment. 'But it isn't true of life. It's cruel or kind, at random.'

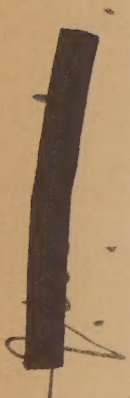
He looked at the graves which held the bodies of so many men to whom life had been only a cruel gift. He thought of his own happiness and wondered why life should have been kind to him and not to them.

'Yes,' he said. 'Life mixes it all up senselessly — the cruel and the kind.'

THE END

DISCARD

DISCARD



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